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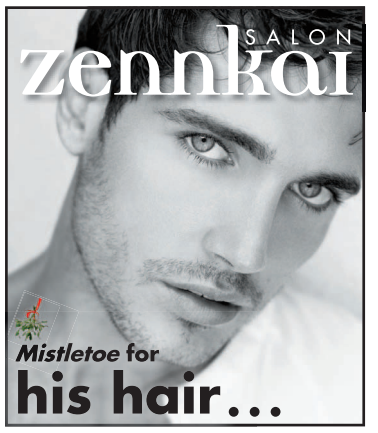

Most in province against coalition, new election

SURVEY The majority of British Columbians, at 61 per cent, oppose allowing the Liberal-NDP-Bloc coalition to form a new government, according to survey results released yesterday.

The Angus Reid Strategies poll also found that 65 per cent of British Columbians are against calling a new federal election.

While Prime Minister Stephen Harper went on the offensive last night to defend his job, rallies are being planned in major cities across the country today — most are organized by labour groups — to support the coalition.

In Vancouver, the B.C. Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress are holding a rally at 6 p.m. outside the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre featuring speakers from the NDP and Liberal parties.

Hedy Fry, Vancouver Centre MP and chair of the B.C. Federal Liberal Caucus, said yesterday all Liberal B.C. MPs and Senators support the coalition as a "responsible alternative to a costly election in a time of fiscal restraint." METRO VANCOUVER

Celebrity Buzz pg 42

Kids are first for Federline

Local pg 4

Art sprouts in Stanley Park

TODD KOROL/REUTERS

An electronics-store employee in Calgary watches Prime Minister Stephen Harper deliver a national televised address last night. Harper pledged to use legal means to save his Conservative minority government.

Harper, Dion battle on the small screen

PM vows to use 'every legal means' to block coalition

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, fighting to stay in power, promised in a rare televised address yesterday to use "every legal means" to block an opposition plan to replace his minority Conservative government.

Harper will visit Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean today and is expected to ask her to suspend Parliament until his newly re-elected government delivers a budget on Jan. 27.

The Liberals and New Democrats — with support of the Bloc Québécois — are vowing to defeat Harper in a confidence vote Monday and form a coalition government.

"At a time like this, a coalition with separatists cannot help Canada," a sombre Harper said in his televised address. "Tonight, I pledge to you that Canada's government will use every legal means at our disposal to protect our democracy, to protect our economy and to protect Canada."

The opposition parties complain there was little in the recent fiscal statement to combat the economic slowdown. But what galvanized them was a government attempt — now abandoned — to cut off subsidies to political parties.

"The opposition does not have the democratic right to impose a coalition with the separatists they promised voters would never happen," Harper said.

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion, in his own televised address in response to Harper said, "If Mr. Harper wants to suspend Parliament, he must first face a vote of confidence."

REUTERS

MORE COVERAGE, PAGES 6, 12

Prime time

- Harper's address was the first nationally televised appeal by a prime minister since 2005 when Paul Martin pleaded for extra time for his minority Liberal government.

VIDEO Prime Minister Stephen Harper's full televised address can be viewed at metronews.ca/canada

Canada Line workers paid $10K for 'injury to dignity'

COMPENSATION Workers from South and Central America who built the Canada Line tunnel beneath False Creek were discriminated against by their employers, the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal ruled yesterday.

The three-person panel ruled that the workers from Colombia, Ecuador and Costa Rica received poorer salaries, accommodations, meals and expenses than their European counterparts.

The tribunal ordered SELI Canada and SNC Lavalin to pay the workers the difference in their salaries and expenses and the average salary and expenses paid to the Europeans.

The tribunal also ordered that each discriminated employee receive $10,000 for compensation for "injury to dignity."

The complaint was filed on the workers behalf by the Construction and Specialized Workers' Union in 2006. The hearing took place on 24 days over eight months. It had been originally scheduled for two weeks and was reduced to a single week prior to its commencement.

The 19-kilometre Canada Line will link downtown Vancouver to Vancouver International Airport. Service is expected to begin in November 2009. METRO VANCOUVER

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Barrister appointed to examine Olympic village bailout leak
The City of Vancouver appointed a barrister to investigate the leak of information related to the Olympic Village bailout. Richard Peck will conduct a two-phase inquiry and present his findings by mid-February 2009. METRO VANCOUVER

Local

A home on the sea

An expected space shortage might mean up to 500 workers will have to share bunks on a cruise ship in Squamish during the 2010 games. Olympic organizers said that would only happen on a rotation-basis with staff on different shifts. NEWS1130.COM

Sports open up a new world

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Goalball athlete and former tandem cycling Paralympian Shawn Marsolais at the Roundhouse Community Centre yesterday.

DISABILITIES When Ross MacDonald was diagnosed with a debilitating neurological disease, he thought he'd have to give up playing soccer.

It wasn't until he was a teenager that he realized any sport could be adapted to be played by people with disabilities, and he joined wheelchair basketball and a soccer league for disabled players.

"(It was) a chance to focus on my abilities, not my disabilities," said MacDonald, who walks with a cane.

He was at the Roundhouse Community Centre yesterday for a daylong celebration of International Day Of Persons With Disabilities.

"The opportunities in sport have never stopped," he said.

Shawn Marsolais, a visually impaired tandem cycling Paralympian and a goalball athlete, said not being able to participate in sports as a child was crushing.

"When I learned there were sports for the blind I was really excited, and I was able to take it all the way to the Paralympics," she said, adding that the experience has given her confidence and drive.

"There's a sport out there for everyone. You just have to find it."

Sport, art and culture

- The theme of yesterday's event was sport, art and culture.
- Mouth artists, disabled musicians and athletes gave demonstrations of their sports and crafts, after which able-bodied visitors got to try.

Desperation forces many into sex trade

KRISTEN THOMPSON
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Many women in desperate situations are forced into the sex trade to survive, and until poverty and addiction are addressed women will continue to have to sell their bodies.

This was the message of several international feminist activists, who were at the downtown YWCA yesterday for an event hosted by the Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter.

Jean Enrique, executive director of the Coalition Against Trafficking of Women-Asia Pacific, said when other options aren't available, some women turn to prostitution.

"Because the Philippines is one of the major suppliers of domestic workers and caregivers (abroad), there will be a lot of them displaced and they will be vulnerable to prostitution," she said.

Young Sook Cho, president of the Centre Of Human Rights in Korea, said Vancouver plays a direct role in the trafficking and prostitution of foreign women because many of them are lured here under the guise of a better life.

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Activist Jean Enrique speaks in Vancouver yesterday.

Journey, not individuals, key to good torch run, expert says

ETHAN ROTBERG
for Metro Vancouver

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

PLANNING The Olympic torch relay is a great chance to showcase communities, and the highlight should be on the journey of the torch and not the individuals, an Olympic torch-relay expert said yesterday.

Diane Henry, who has more than 20 years of experience and helped plan the Beijing 2008 relay, was in Vancouver to help community leaders and businesses make the most of the upcoming event.

"It's a great chance to showcase local businesses," Henry said. "Communities can set up street parties, food and wine fairs or even town themes."

Henry also spoke about the importance of planning details such as crowd control, fencing and staging.

News in brief

BALLET More than half of the Nutcracker tickets Ballet B.C. needed to sell to save the company have been sold, it was announced yesterday. Around 7,000 seats for the December showing of the Nutcracker have been purchased. Graeme Barrit, president of Ballet B.C.'s board of directors, said selling 12,000 tickets could save the company. METRO VANCOUVER

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video Canada's Sea King is the Energizer Bunny of naval aviation at **metronews.ca/canada**

Video Can cellphones actually pop popcorn? **metronews.ca/canada**

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Electrician gets 30 months probation for hidden camera
He has also been ordered to write a letter of apology for installing the camera in the ceiling of a women's restroom at Prince George airport. **CBC.CA/BC**

PAUL COLANGELO/SUBMITTED

Fringe by Shirley Wiebe, installed in August, is part of the Stanley Park Environmental Art Project.

Beauty in destruction

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

A series of environmental works of art have sprouted among wreckage of the 2006 windstorm that knocked down thousands of trees in Vancouver's Stanley Park.

The works — some of which are on display in prominent places, like the old polar bear exhibit near the Aquarium, or along secluded trails — are part of the first (temporary) phase of the Stanley Park Environmental Art Project.

Each of the installations, which can be viewed with a self-guided map downloaded at *vancouver.ca/spea*, is designed to last for a couple of months, up to two years.

Tania Willard, a Secwepemc (Shuswap) artist, said she was drawn to the project because it used only natural materials and was done in consultation with ecologists.

"It felt like a holistic approach to an art project in the Park," said Willard, whose work, Birth, is an exposed hemlock root system on the Cathedral Trail near the Lost Lagoon.

PAUL COLANGELO/SUBMITTED

T'Uy'Tanat Cease Wyss, with Italian-born sculptor Davide Pan, planted West Coast species on a red cedar stump. The plants' names were carved into the stump in Squamish and English.

"The inspiration is about putting a more visible face to that land with an invisible handshake between indigenous and non-indigenous species," Wyss said.

Other projects included Hibernators and Fringe by Shirley Wiebe and Cedar by John Hemsworth and Peter von Tiesenhausen.

The works are a lead-up to a number of semi-permanent installations (lasting between two and five years) next summer.

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Top: Cedar by John Hemsworth and Peter von Tiesenhausen, installed in June. Bottom: Local artists John Hemsworth, from left, Tania Willard, Shirley Wiebe, Davide Pan and T'Uy'Tanat Cease Wyss, in front, in Stanley Park yesterday.

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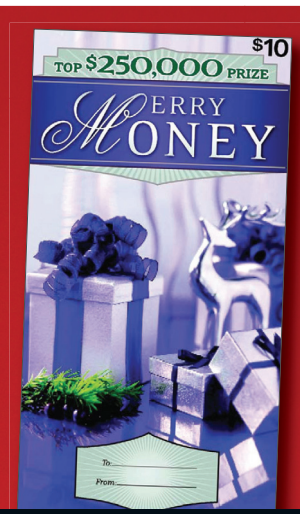

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Harper government to deport another Iraq war resister

Immigration officials yesterday told Dean Walcott, former U.S. marine and Iraq war resister, that he has until Jan. 6 to leave Canada or be deported. Robin Long, a war resister deported on June 3, was court-martialled and received two felony convictions. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Canada

Record-setting month

Canada's two major airlines said yesterday their planes had bigger passenger loads last month, despite economic turmoil. Both Air Canada and rival WestJet Airlines Ltd. said their November load factors, a measure of space on their planes filled by paying passengers, rose to a record for the month. But the two carriers improved for different reasons, with Air Canada benefiting from cutbacks while WestJet's traffic strengthened. REUTERS

Focus on economy: Dion

Liberal leader says Canadians don't want another election

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion told Canadians that Stephen Harper has lost the confidence of the House of Commons and urged the Governor General to reject any request by the Prime Minister to temporarily suspend Parliament.

Responding to Harper's nationally-televised speech last night, Dion said he is asking Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean to ensure that the Tory minority government faces a vote of confidence before any move to temporarily close down the House of Commons.

"In our Canada, the government is accountable for its decisions and actions in Parliament."
Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion

"In our Canada, the government is accountable for its decisions and actions in Parliament," Dion said.

Harper, whose minority government faces defeat on its economic policies as early as Monday, may ask Jean today to close down Parliament until January, when the Conservatives plan to bring in a budget.

Dion devoted much of his talk to explaining the aims of the Liberal-New Democrat coalition that, with the support of the Bloc Québécois, plans to oust Harper and govern.

"Canadians don't want another election, they want Parliamentarians to work together. That's our job ... put aside partisanship and focus on the economy."

NDP Leader Jack Layton later said that the Liberal-NDP coalition is an answer to the government's lack of action on the economy.

Layton said Harper "refused to act" in the face of "an economic storm unlike anything seen in a generation."

"He's more interested in his job than you and your families' jobs," Layton said.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Twitchell's lawyer pleads not guilty

COURT An indie filmmaker accused of luring a man to a garage and murdering him pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder yesterday morning in Edmonton.

Though 29-year-old Mark Twitchell did not appear in court, a defence representative for his lawyer, David Cunningham was present and entered a plea on his behalf.

Twitchell has not appeared in a courtroom since his arrest on Halloween, but is expected to make his next court appearance Feb. 19. The preliminary inquiry into the death of 38-year-old Johnny Altinger has been scheduled for Oct. 5 to Oct. 30. VICTORIA HANDYSIDES / METRO CANADA

Ottawa **Illumination ceremony**

TIM WIECLAWSKI/METRO CANADA

University of Ottawa students Dabina Hargrove, from left, and Ryan Surujballi and Carleton University Student Brett Ruskin enjoy some hot chocolate, cookies and choral music outside Tabaret Hall last night during the school's annual Holiday Lights illumination ceremony.

RCMP seeking eight people in connection with bombings

PIPELINE The RCMP are looking for eight people seen mailing letters in Dawson Creek in an effort to break the investigation into three pipeline explosions in northeastern British Columbia.

The Mounties released a series of images from video surveillance tapes that show eight people at the Shoppers Drug Mart in Dawson Creek apparently mailing letters on Oct. 7, the day that three threatening letters were sent from that location.

Unusual step

- The RCMP has even taken the unusual step of launching a dedicated website, *www.dawsoncreekbombings.com*, with information they hope will generate tips on who is responsible for the attacks.

"We will not negotiate with terrorists which you are as you keep on endangering our families with crazy expansion of crazy gas wells in our home lands," the letter read.

The attacked facilities were all involved in the production of sour gas, containing toxic hydrogen sulfide which is removed at a processing plant near Tomslake, B.C., before the gas is shipped to market.

Sgt. Tim Shields said yesterday the saboteur, or saboteurs, likely live in the area where the three attacks occurred.

"So far, there has been excellent co-operation from the community regarding this investigation. However, there have been some individuals who have been less than forthcoming and somewhat uncooperative," police said in a statement.

There have been no injuries in the bombings, but two caused small gas leaks. All the attacks occurred in the middle of the night at facilities in remote rural areas near the B.C.-Alberta border.

EnCana also released a statement yesterday saying it does not believe the attacks were intended to to kill anyone, but it warned that could happen by accident if the incidents continue.
METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

AIDS The Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange launched its Get the Facts Campaign yesterday. The campaign aims to empower people living with HIV to make well-informed treatment decisions and improve their health. At the launch, CATIE presented the first three posters and postcards in a series of materials encouraging discussion about starting and adhering to HIV treatment.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Man fatally shot by Cape Breton RCMP
RCMP shot and killed John Andrew Simon, 44, in the Wagmatcook First Nations community near Baddeck in Cape Breton, N.S., Tuesday night. RCMP were responding to a domestic complaint. Halifax police have been called in to investigate the shooting. **METRO CANADA**

News in brief

LISTERIOSIS The listeriosis outbreak earlier this year has caused Canadians to change their eating habits when it comes to ready-to-eat meats, says a study from the University of Guelph, CBC News Online reports. Before the scare, six per cent of respondents said they never consumed ready-to-eat meats at home. That number jumped to 39 per cent after the outbreak.

HEALTH Inuit have much less access to medical resources than the average Canadian, Statistics Canada said yesterday. According to a report, 56 per cent of Inuit adults had contact with a doctor last year, while 79 per cent of total Canadians reported contact with a doctor. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Pro/con coalition rallies today

JEFF CUMMINGS
Metro Canada

The thought of having a coalition form the next government in Ottawa has sparked Edmontonians on both sides of the debate to kick off protests today.

Those against a Liberal and NDP coalition government supported by the Bloc Québécois are expected to rally at the constituency office of NDP MP Linda Duncan — Alberta's only non-Conservative MP.

Pro-coalition supporters are expected to hold an evening protest organized by the Alberta Federation of Labour.

BEN LEMPHERS/FOR METRO EDMONTON

Students from the University of Alberta Conservative Association display signs thy've made in preparation for an anti-coalition government rally today.

Former city councillor Michael Phair, who will be emceeing the pro-coalition rally tonight, doesn't mind the idea of a coalition.

"A coalition is a positive thing and it can work," he said.

"It will have a priority in dealing with the economy, and that there is an agreement within the coalition to work together for the next 2½ years."

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Arrest made in death of Alberta teen

VICTORIA HANDYSIDES
Metro Canada

After 68 days, RCMP have arrested a person in connection with the death of 14-year-old Emily Stauffer.

RCMP officers slapped handcuffs on an Edson, Alta., man yesterday, though charges were not immediately sworn. Once official charges are laid, the man's age and identity will be released.

Emily Stauffer

The pastor's daughter was killed as she walked on a wooded path in broad daylight on Sept. 27, gripping the small community in shock and fear.

An investigative team of more than 40 officers from a number of divisions in central and northern Alberta have scoured the area since the brutal slaying.

Though a medical examiner's report was completed, officials have been tight-lipped about how the girl died.

Documents seem to contradict Airbus testimony

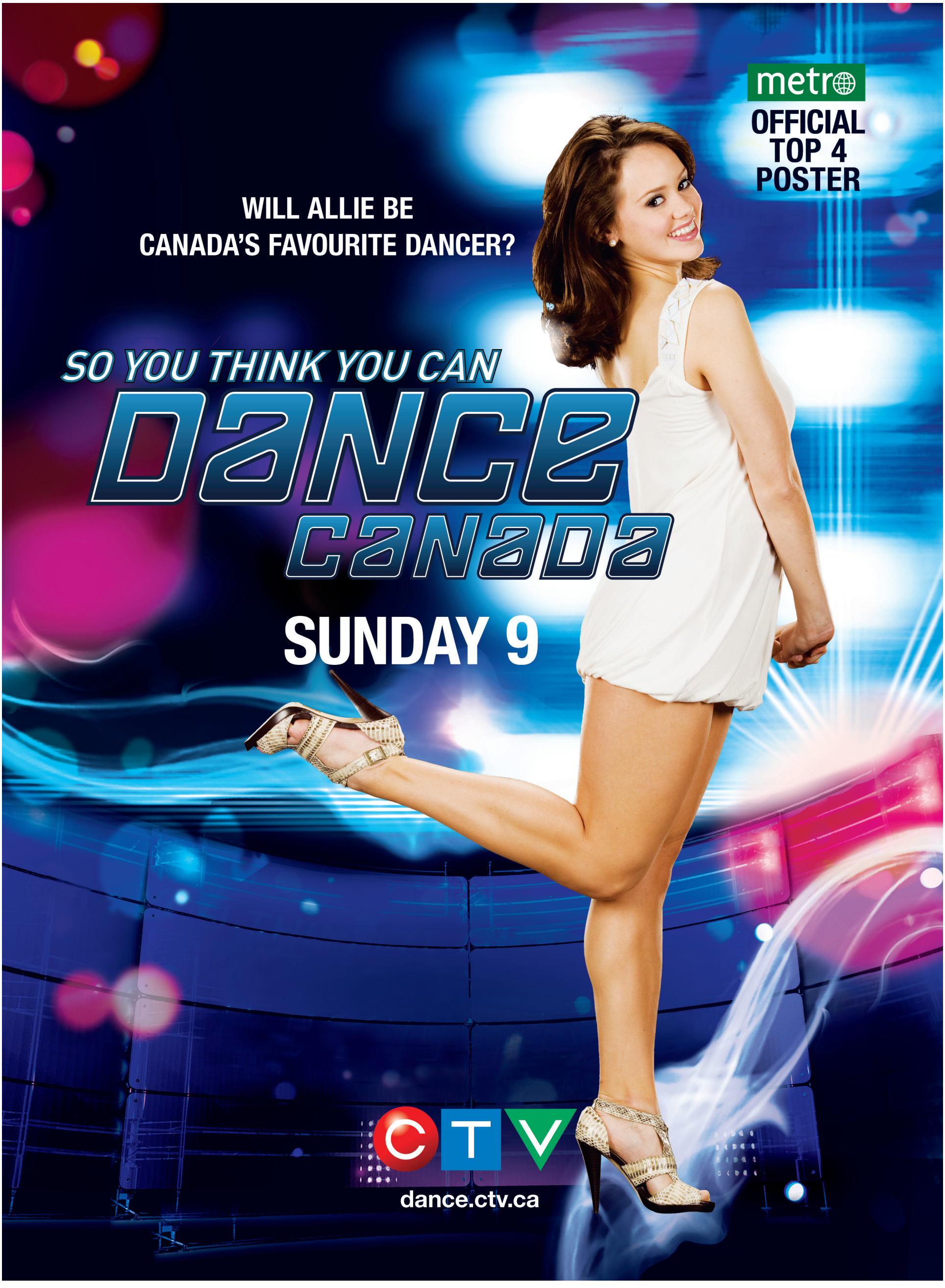
OTTAWA Documents that appear to contradict sworn testimony from an aide to Brian Mulroney about the "Airbus" affair should be examined at a public inquiry into the former prime minister's dealings with Karlheinz Schreiber, members of a Commons ethics committee say.

The documents show the committee was deprived of crucial information when they were looking into circumstances surrounding the payments made to Mulroney in hotel rooms in 1993 and 1994, Liberal MP Paul Szabo said yesterday.

"They effectively subverted the opportunity the committee had to get at the truth," claimed Szabo, who chaired the committee during hearings that began a year ago and continued into this year.

Posted on Schreiber's website, the documents appear at odds with testimony from former Mulroney chief of staff Fred Doucet, who told the committee he had "no knowledge" of anything to do with Airbus.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE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Family of trampled Wal-Mart employee files lawsuit

The family of a man killed in a stampede of frenzied holiday shoppers filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Wal-Mart Stores Inc yesterday, seeking unspecified damages. Shoppers on New York's Long Island broke down doors and surged into the Valley Stream Wal-Mart at 5 a.m. last Friday. REUTERS

World

FCC looks at free Internet decision

U.S. communications regulators will consider a controversial spectrum auction plan for free Internet and new rules governing disputes between cable operators and programmers at their December meeting, the agency's chairman said yesterday. Federal Communications Commission chairman Kevin Martin is proposing that the agency auction off some airwaves, with a mandate that 25 per cent be set aside for free Internet. REUTERS

U.S. urging co-operation

The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff urged Pakistan yesterday to investigate all possible links between the Mumbai attacks and Pakistani groups and to broaden its campaign against militants.

Admiral Mike Mullen flew in for talks with Pakistan's eight-month-old civilian government and military commanders, as part of U.S. diplomatic efforts to diffuse tension between Pakistan and India after the Mumbai attacks.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was in New Delhi to consult the Indian government.

Mullen urged Pakistani officials to "investigate aggressively any and all possible ties to groups based in Pakistan," the U.S. embassy said in a statement.

Rice urged Pakistan to cooperate "fully and transparently" in the investigation. She is due in Islamabad today.

Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee said the attacks on Mumbai that killed at least 171 people were led from inside Pakistan, and said India would protect its territorial integrity.

Meanwhile, Pakistan killed up to 30 Islamist militants in an air strike and three soldiers and a civilian were killed in a suicide attack in the northwest near the Afghan border yesterday, officials said. REUTERS

Congo **European peacekeeping mission on hold**

PETER ANDREWS/REUTERS

A child plays in a puddle in a camp for displaced people yesterday near the town of Mugunga, Democratic Republic of Congo. Belgium said yesterday it saw no prospect of a European peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for now.

News in brief

SCIENCE Man-made noise from ships and sonar in the world's seas is becoming an increasing threat to whales, dolphins and turtles who use sound to communicate, forage and find mates, wildlife experts said.

ARMS More than 90 nations, including 18 NATO members, signed a treaty yesterday to ban deadly cluster bombs. REUTERS

Flights clear for takeoff in Thailand

PROTEST Anti-government protesters lifted their crippling, eight-day blockade of Thailand's main airport yesterday, raising the hopes of 230,000 stranded tourists even though there is no end in sight to the wider political crisis.

A Thai Airways domestic flight landed earlier in the morning and several international flights were scheduled to leave soon after. although it was unclear when full operations would resume.

Still cheering Tuesday's sacking of the government by the courts, thousands of yellow-shirted People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) activists made way for an army of cleaners at the Suvarnabhumi air terminal. REUTERS

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Andrew Cohen

Canada & world insight

The Conservatives built their recent re-election campaign around leadership. They put Stephen Harper front and centre in their effort to persuade Canadians that only he could lead them through the coming economic storm.

The problem for Harper was the popular distrust that has followed him around like a cranky footnote. While few doubted Harper's intelligence and discipline, they never found him very likeable.

It was famously said that Franklin D. Roosevelt had a second-class intellect and a first-class temperament. It wasn't really true — FDR was also bright — but the reverse can surely be said of Stephen Harper. He has a first-class intellect and a second-class temperament.

Politics is all about marketing, and the selling of Stephen Harper has always been hard.

That he is cold and distant, that he is humourless and wooden, we knew. But politicians of that ilk, such as Richard Nixon, can get elected if they can persuade us of their competence.

This Harper had done in 2½ years in office. But to win a majority, to close the deal with Canadians, he had to make them more comfortable with him — to like him.

And so the smart Tory strategists dressed him in sweaters.

They had him play the piano and play with children — all to make this wallflower look fragrant.

It failed. Canadians denied Harper his majority, again. In Quebec, where he had hoped to find extra seats, all it took was a disparaging comment about culture and artists that was so silly he refused to repeat it in French.

The mask fell. Suddenly, there he was, his contempt laid bare.

It reinforced a sense of meanness, and it cost him.

When Parliament reconvened, he talked conciliation.

Stephen Harper

Facing another minority, he seemed to want to make the institution work.

So what did he do?

He cancelled public financing of political parties, bankrupting his opponents.

And he suspended the right to strike of public servants.

He thought he could get away with both while the Liberals were leaderless.

He is an unreconstructed bully, and presented with a chance to land a blow upon a bruise, he can't resist.

We have never had a prime minister in memory quite like him. John Diefenbaker, Pierre Trudeau, Brian Mulroney and Jean Chrétien could brawl but had charm. Louis St. Laurent, Lester Pearson and Joe Clark were gentle souls.

Stephen Harper is something else. And that's why he and his government are in trouble today.

Andrew Cohen, a professor and journalist, is the author of Extraordinary Canadians: Lester B. Pearson.

MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Men, not poverty, affect crime rate

Neil Boyd

As Canada slips and slides toward higher rates of unemployment, many are asking whether this will increase crime.

The simple answer is that unemployment and crime rates are not systematically related. It's not that poverty is unrelated to crime, but it's just not possible to find any statistical relationship between changing rates of unemployment and changing rates of crime over the past 50 years.

If, on the other hand, you start looking at our jail populations, you begin to see familiar portraits: Most are male, working class or poorer, with little education and few social skills.

Consider, for example, homicide in Canada.

For the past 50 years, British Columbia has had a rate of killing that is five times that of Newfoundland — a province that for decades languished under double-digit unemployment. What drives homicide rates (and most other crime rates) is not unemployment, or even poverty, but two more important variables: Culture and demographic shifts.

The culture of British Columbia is quite different from that of Newfoundland — the West has less community, a more transient population, and an established network of young men who use handguns as their tool of last resort in business transactions. Second, more than 70 per cent of all crime, in every country in the world, is committed by young men between the ages of 15 and 29. If the percentage of the male population between these ages either increases or shrinks, crime rates will rise and fall accordingly. When crime in Canada began to rise in the late 1960s, it was because of the surge of the baby boomers.

Meaningful change depends on ... the communities we create.

In 1976, young men between 18 and 29 made up 10 per cent of the Canadian population; today, they represent less than five per cent. When crime rates began to fall in the early 1990s it was no surprise; the tail end of the surge of the baby boomers, those born in 1964, left their crime prone years in 1993.

In other words, tough economic times are not going to drive our crime rates down, or through the roof. Meaningful change depends on our culture and the communities we create — and, unfortunately, on the prevalence of young men in our populations.

Neil Boyd is a criminologist at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver

Letters

What's so abnormal about just wanting to date?

Re: Blame the Boomers by Denise Rudnicki, Dec. 3.

Based on a couple of examples, you conclude that young people today are not marrying simply because they are selfish, materialistic and egomaniacal. That's quite a broad brush with which you're painting.

Marriage is not necessarily a sign of maturity. Anyone can get married, but some people aren't emotionally prepared or simply inclined to make such a profound commitment. So what if people are happy "just" dating? It's attitudes like yours that makes society view unmarried people as abnormalities.

MELISSA HENRY, TORONTO, ONT.

Harper doing a disservice to Canada's national unity

The Harper Conservatives are doing a great disservice to national unity in demonizing an eventual Liberal-NDP coalition just because it has Bloc Québécois support.

Canadian nationalists should welcome this opportunity.

LUKE MAYBA, VANCOUVER, B.C.

Coalition went up the Hill to fetch a pail of power

Separatists can not be allowed to be part of any coalition. The Liberals and NDP are not concerned for all Canadians, and this will heat up Western separation as they attack oil and potash wealth. Jack and Gilles along with Stéphane may try to go up the Hill to fetch a pail of power, but Canadians will see to it they fall down and break their (self-appointed) crowns.

RICHARD KNACK, EDMONTON, ALTA.

Politics interesting again

I am so pleased about this whole episode of coalition government and it has generated so much interest across the country.

We have never seen anything like this. We are 30 million-plus and we have 30 million-plus opinions from taxi drivers, bus drivers, bartenders, barbers and students. You name it, we have one. We have always known that Canadian politics is boring and participation level is always low. Well done politicians, you folks finally did it. You woke us all up.

ANANT NAGPUR, OTTAWA, ONT.

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Wealthy penny pinchers
The chief executive of American Express Co. said yesterday that the current financial downturn is strongly affecting the spending of people in high income levels, a departure from prior economic slowdowns. REUTERS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Housing sales to stay stalled

First half of 2009 to be 'somewhat static:' Report

Canada's real estate market is expected to be "somewhat static" for at least the next six months as the economic downturn makes potential buyers extra cautious, while the average house price is expected to fall, according to a report released yesterday.

The Re/Max Housing Market Outlook, which tracks 22 markets across the country, says it expects 440,000 homes to change hands in 2008, down 15 per cent from 2007. It predicted the same number of sales for next year, but the first six to nine months of 2009 will be under pressure from volatility in financial markets and the threat of recession.

Report highlights

- A buyers market emerged in the latter half of 2008.
- Housing values are expected to slip three per cent to an average of $300,000.
- Unit sales should match 2008 levels by year end 2009, but the average price is forecast to fall another two per cent to $293,000.

Housing markets should recover as stability returns to the financial sector the Re/Max report said. If consumer confidence is restored and overall economic activity picks up, so should the housing market and a bounce-back could occur "as early as spring."

Eleven major markets are expected to match or exceed 2008 home sales next year. REUTERS

RIM to push Certicom bid despite stalled talks

TAKEOVER BlackBerry maker Research In Motion said yesterday it plans to make a direct takeover offer to Certicom Corp shareholders of $1.50 a share in cash because it has been unable to advance talks with the encryption software firm's management.

The offer, which comes after RIM cut its third-quarter profit and revenue outlook, represents a 76.5 per cent premium over the closing price of Certicom stock on Dec. 2, RIM said.

The bid, which values Certicom at about $66 million, is not subject to financing conditions and will be funded by cash on hand, RIM said. It expects to formally commence the offer by Dec. 12 after receiving a shareholder list. REUTERS

Business in brief

RATE CUT New Zealand's central bank slashed interest rates by a record 150 basis points because of financial market turmoil and a markedly weaker economy, and said it may cut further to speed the move out of recession.

APPLE Apple Inc. might be unfairly blocking rival software makers who want to sell music for its IPhone, according to some rivals and a technology rights group. The ITunes store accounts for four out of five songs sold online in the U.S.

MYSPACE News Corp's online social network site Myspace will make video clips from its members' pages available for viewing on mobile devices including the BlackBerry Bold, Palm Centro, Motorola Q9, and LG Voyager, among others. REUTERS

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CBS to run Yahoo's Internet radio service

Chalk up another Internet radio casualty of significantly increased royalty fees for airing music online. Yahoo Music, once the top music destination on the web, is handing over the bulk of its Launchcast Internet radio operations to CBS Radio. REUTERS

Emerson named to Finning board

Heavy equipment dealer Finning International Inc. has appointed former Canadian government minister David Emerson to its board of directors, the company said yesterday.

Emerson's "wide-ranging leadership background, extensive senior executive exposure, and broad political and public policy experience will be invaluable to Finning," Doug Whitehead, chairman of Finning's board, said in a statement.

Emerson, a former chief executive at lumber company Canfor Corp., was elected as a Liberal MP but switched over to the Conservatives when they took office in early 2006 to become trade minister, and then foreign minister.

He did not seek reelection in the Oct. 14 federal vote.

Vancouver-based Finning is the world's largest Caterpillar equipment dealer. It sells, rents and provides customer support services for Caterpillar equipment and engines in Western Canada, the United Kingdom and parts of South America.

It counts oil sands, mining and power systems companies among its main customers. REUTERS

Stock woes

- Finning's stock is down around 56 per cent so far in 2008, largely due to its exposure to the mining and energy sectors, which have taken a hit from the global economic downturn as demand for commodities has waned.

G8 Financial leaders meet

REUTERS/BENOIT TESSIER

Thomas J. Donohue, from left, of the United States Chamber of Commerce, and France's MEDEF head Laurence Parisot listen to Fujio Mitarai of the Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren) as they attend a news conference during the G8 business leaders meeting in Paris yesterday.

Grim news triggers wave of rate cuts

INTEREST Record declines in the vast U.S. and European service sectors and more grim U.S. employment news yesterday sparked fear of an economic "free fall," setting up another round of aggressive interest rate cuts.

Central banks in Thailand and New Zealand led the way, rolling back borrowing costs sharply. Britain, the eurozone and Sweden were expected to follow suit today.

Weak October

- A snapshot of U.S. business conditions released by the Fed yesterday showed activity weakened across the country in October as job layoffs picked up and retail sales slumped.

Reports showing the U.S. service sector, the main engine of economic growth, fell to a record low while private employers shed 250,000 jobs in November also boosted chances the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates later this month.

Tomorrow's more comprehensive government report could show job losses in excess of 300,000, which would be the highest since the aftermath of 9-11. REUTERS

Waning Nexen talks hit TSX

MARKETS The Toronto Stock Exchange's main index finished lower for a third straight session yesterday with energy shares sliding as talk about a possible hostile takeover bid for Nexen Inc. by Total SA fizzled out.

The S&P/TSX composite index closed down 30.85 points, or 0.37 per cent, at 8,296.96 with six of its 10 subindexes finishing lower. REUTERS

Falling Nexen

- Nexen Inc. shares dropped $2.23, or 9.3 per cent, to close at $21.65 on the TSX.

Apple blocking ITunes rivals?

MUSIC Apple Inc. might be unfairly blocking rival software makers who want to sell music for its IPhone, according to some rivals and a technology rights group. Apple declined to comment, but its lawyer wrote a competitor to say the company is defending its rights. REUTERS

Nestle rejects contamination finding

MELAMINE Saudi Arabia said yesterday that harmful concentrations of melamine had been found in milk powder made by a Nestle plant in China, but the world's largest food group rejected the findings.

"All Nestle dairy products sold in Saudi Arabia — just as anywhere else in the world — are absolutely safe for consumption. No Nestle product is made from milk adulterated with melamine," Nestle said in a statement.

The Saudi Food and Drug Authority reported its findings on its website. REUTERS

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NFL in 3-D

The NFL will broadcast tonight's Raiders/Chargers game in 3-D to three theatres in New York, Boston and Los Angeles. Eight 3-D camera crews will film the action for the test broadcast, which will have its own commentators. 3-D viewers must don polarized lenses to see the action. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

AL MVP signs deal with Red Sox

The Boston Red Sox have agreed to terms with AL MVP Dustin Pedroia on a six-year contract with a club option for 2015. Financial terms were not disclosed, but numerous media outlets in Boston say the deal is worth $40.5 million. The new pact covers Pedroia's remaining arbitration years and buys out two years of free agency — three if the option is exercised. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Snapping a three-game losing streak in the home of the defending Stanley Cup champs may sound like a bleak proposition, but the Canucks don't mind their chances. Vancouver has won two of the three matchups with Detroit this season, although both of those wins came in overtime. The most recent came at GM Place ten days ago with Sami Salo playing the hero in the extra frame and Curtis Sanford making 32 stops in a 3-2 win.

COLD SNAP: After starting the season with a flurry of goals, the third line of Ryan Kesler, Alex Burrows, and Jannik Hansen has been as frigid as the ice they play on. The trio has combined for a total of three goals since the start of November.

FLYING LOW: Despite scoring the second most goals in the NHL this season, the Red Wings have been held to two or fewer goals in four of their last five games.

BAD COMBINATION: Only Anaheim averages more penalty minutes per game than Vancouver, while Detroit boasts the league's best powerplay.

Sports in brief

MLB According to the New York Daily News, the Atlanta Braves are preparing an offer for A.J. Burnett. Atlanta also reached a tentative deal Tuesday to acquire Javier Vazquez from the White Sox. METRO NEWS SERVICES

The kids go to camp

MATTHEW WUEST
Metro Canada

The boys in the red and white may be a little green at this year's world junior championship in Ottawa.

Hockey Canada announced yesterday its 38-player selection camp roster for the world junior championship, a group that will gather for four days in Ottawa starting Dec. 11.

Eighteen players coming to camp are aged 18 or younger, while there are only four returnees from the group that won Canada's fourth-straight gold medal last year.

"It could be a bunch of 18-year-olds that make it," head coach Pat Quinn said. "It will be about maturity. Let's face it: Some 18-year-olds are more mature than some at 19 or 25 for that matter. If we're young, that's what we are."

TORSTAR FILE PHOTO

Zach Boychuk, left and P.K. Subban are two of the returning attendees.

The roster features four goalies, 14 defencemen and 20 forwards. Forwards John Tavares and Zach Boychuk and blueliners Thomas Hickey and P.K. Subban are the returnees.

Much-talked-about Montreal Junior forward Angelo Esposito will get a fourth crack at making the roster.

Some of the bigger names among the newcomers are Taylor Hall, an early favourite to go No. 1 in the 2010 NHL draft; Vancouver Canucks first-rounder Cody Hodgson; and St. Louis Blues fourth overall pick Alex Pietrangelo.

One-dimensional players were not welcome.

"The guys coming to camp are real good players that do something elite, but they have a well-rounded game," said the team's head scout, Al Murray.

If Canada can win a fifth straight medal, it would match its own record of five straight titles from 1992 to 1997.

"At the end of the day on Dec. 15, we're hoping we can pick 22 men who will come together as a team," Quinn said. "It's not skill that wins in any game of hockey. It's how those skills blend to come together stronger as a unit."

The tournament opens Boxing Day in Ottawa.

Avery has to be held responsible

ToulBox

Scott Rintoul
scott.rintoul@team1040.ca

The NHL has screwed up countless times under Gary Bettman's watch, but the league did the right thing by suspending Sean Avery for his crude comments earlier this week.

His decision to gather the media in order to refer to his ex-girlfriends as "sloppy seconds" was premeditated and extremely ill conceived.

It doesn't matter if you personally weren't offended; it doesn't matter if you've heard people say worse. What does matter is that Avery's job dictates that he be accountable for what he says in certain environments, and he chose to make statements that were both degrading to women and specifically malicious to Elisha Cuthbert and Rachel Hunter. The NHL may not be Avery's direct employer, but it is the governing body that passes judgment on such issues, and I fully support this particular decision.

It will be interesting to see whether the Stars part ways with Avery once his suspension has been served, as Dallas owner Tom Hicks is less than pleased with the volatile forward's antics. Should Dallas cut him loose, it's hard to imagine any team rolling out the welcome mat in the near future based on the baggage Avery brings with him. We may not see Sean Avery on NHL ice for quite some time, which would suit most fans just fine.

• Canucks' goalie Curtis Sanford skated at yesterday's practice, and if he feels well this morning, don't be surprised to see him between the pipes tonight in Detroit. Though Cory Schneider may get the start against the Wings as a measure of caution, Sanford beat the defending champs just ten days ago with a 32 save performance in Vancouver. Also skating this week, Roberto Luongo, who continues to rehab his injured groin following that freak injury in Pittsburgh on Nov. 22.

There is still no timetable for Luongo's return, but suffice to say the Canucks will have to hold the goaltender out longer than he likes, as his insatiable desire to play could compromise his health if he is allowed to return when he wants.

Mitchell out, Triano in

NBA The Toronto Raptors fired head coach Sam Mitchell yesterday, a day after the team suffered the fifth-worst defeat in franchise history.

Canadian assistant Jay Triano, formerly in charge of Canada's national team, was appointed interim coach and, according to Raptors President Bryan Colangelo, is expected to remain in the role through the end of the season. "It's safe to say after the debacle we all witnessed last night, (a 39-point loss to Denver), not to mention several other instances ... you come to a point where you realize some of the things you want to see out there aren't taking place," Colangelo told reporters.

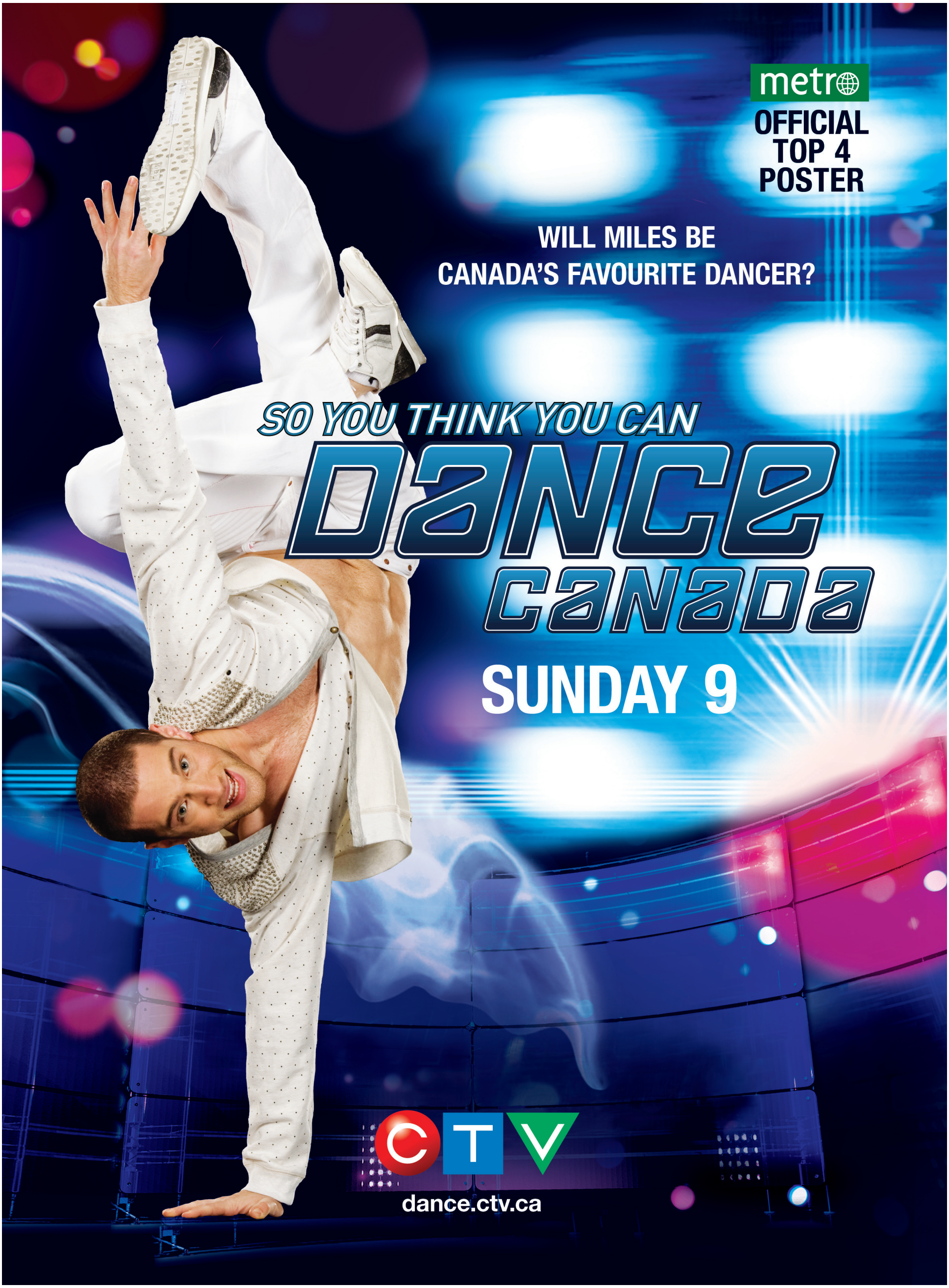
Mitchell

In four-plus seasons in Toronto, Mitchell posted a record of 156-189, earning NBA coach of the year in 2006-07 after guiding the Raptors to the Atlantic Division title and back into the playoffs for the first time in five years. REUTERS

Sports in brief

NHL The Carolina Hurricanes fired coach Peter Laviolette yesterday and replaced him with his predecessor Paul Maurice. Maurice will return to the job he held for seven full seasons and parts of two others before coaching Toronto.

SOCCER The Vancouver Whitecaps announced yesterday the signing of defender Justin Thompson and the re-signing of defender/midfielder Mason Trafford. METRO NEWS SERVICES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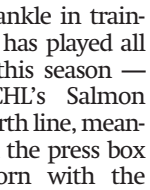
It'll get better for Canucks

TheHockeyNews



Sam McCaig

thehockeynews.com

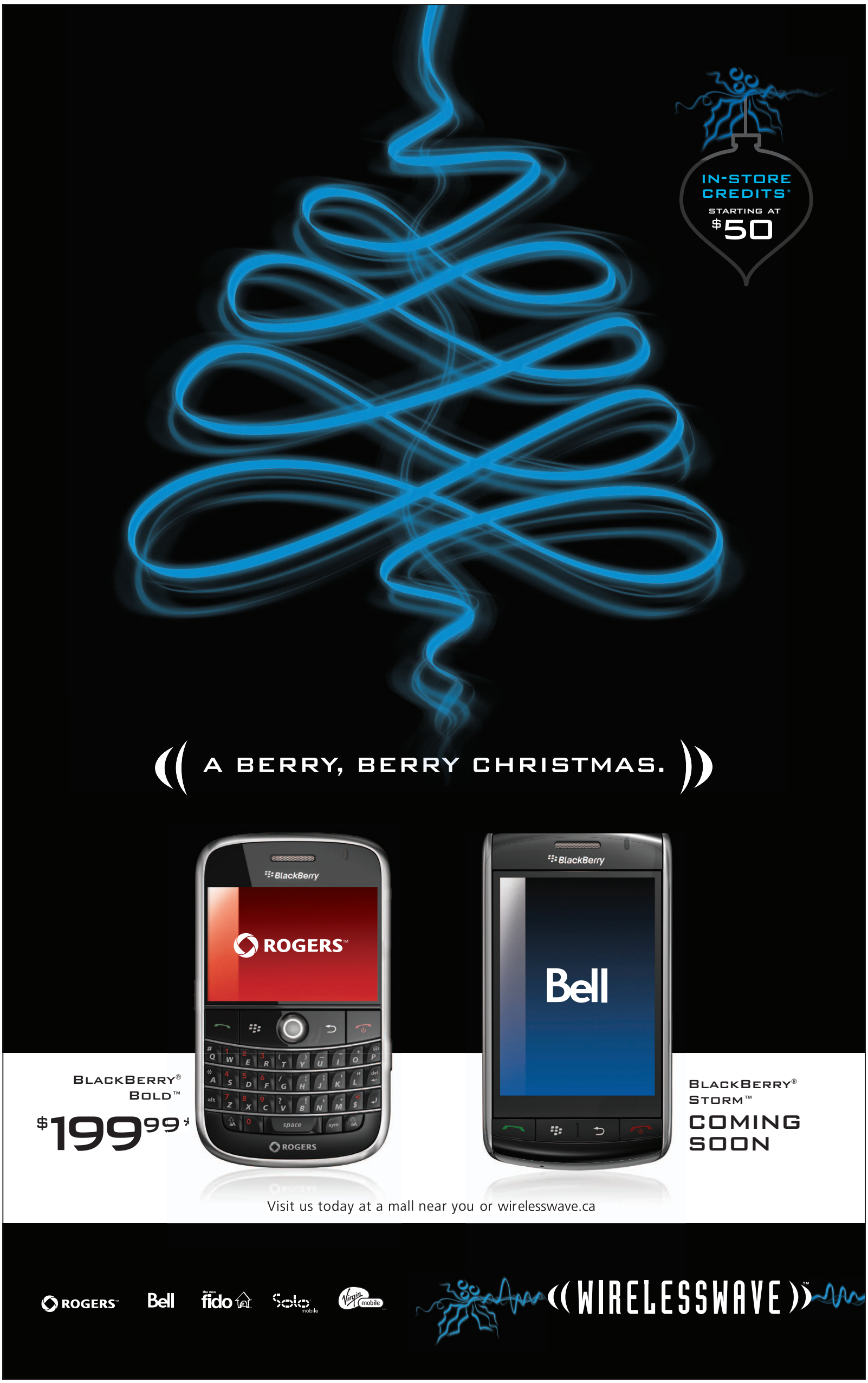
No goalies, no fourth line, no home games. It's not easy being a Vancouver Canucks fan right now.

Vancouver's top two netminders are hurting, the entire fourth line is in sick bay and, to top it all off, the Canucks don't seem to play in British Columbia anymore.

Roberto Luongo remains out with a groin strain and backup Curtis Sanford was forced to leave Monday's game in Columbus — on the road, natch — with back spasms. That leaves Vancouver with a crease consisting of just-called-up rookie Cory Schneider and, perhaps, Julien Ellis, the only other goaltender signed by the Canucks to an NHL contract. Ellis hurt his ankle in training camp and has played all of one game this season — with the ECHL's Salmon Kings. The fourth line, meanwhile, is up in the press box sharing popcorn with the goalies. Ryan Johnson (out until early January with broken bones in his foot and finger), Rick Rypien (sports hernia surgery on Oct. 30) and now Darcy Hordichuk ("slight" fracture in his foot; indefinite) are all sidelined, robbing the Canucks of toughness and tenacity — and penalty-killing prowess, too. These guys might not score much, but they create space for their more talented teammates; their presence will be missed.

Of course, if you're a Vancouver fan, you might not have been aware of all these things, what with the Canucks in the middle of yet another road trip, this time a seven-city tour (they've already had a four-gamer and a six-game stretch away from home.) When the Canucks return home for a game against Florida a week from Sunday, on Dec. 14, they'll have played 19 of their first 30 games on the road.

The good news is, once the current trip is finished, the Canucks play 17 of their next 22 games at home. Look at it this way: That's about one game every three days, for two months from mid-December through mid-February, with the vast majority of those games at home. In today's NHL, you couldn't ask for a friendlier schedule.



A real crowd pleaser
This Charity Box Holiday gift set — which includes a Charity Pot, Fair Trade Foot Lotion, Nutts, Karma Soap and The Olive Branch Shower Gel — is also vegan-friendly. Available at Lush for $59.99. For more, go to *lush.ca*. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide III

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Gamers' delight

KAREN FALCON
for Metro Canada

GOT A GAMER on your list? This roundup of recent releases (all under $70) covers the best across the three major consoles and includes something for every age. Throw in extra batteries for controllers and you'll be a gift-giving mastermind.

Call of **Duty:** World at War

Platform: PS2, PS3, Nintendo DS, Wii, Xbox 360
Genre: First-person shooter
Rated: M: 17+

What better gift is there than a flamethrower? None. And you can give the gift of flamethrower by giving COD: World at War.

Powered by the same technology that made the rock-solid COD4 a superstar, this instalment of the franchise focuses on the European and Pacific battles of WWII. It's the best-looking WWII game to date. Add the one-to-four player co-op mode and the replay value just keeps going up. Online multi-player doesn't disappoint.

de **Blob**

Platform: Wii, iPhone
Genre: Puzzle
Rated: E: Everyone

It's a colour revolution! OK: You're a ball. A jiggly, wriggly, gummy little ball that rolls around and restores colour to a monochromatic world, one bounce and splat at a time. You see, the evil INKT Corporation has taken over and outlawed all colour from daily life. Your mission is to investigate and re-animate 10 massive worlds. You'll be thumb-stickin', arm wavin', zappin' and making other assorted silly and dramatic yet satisfying gestures to control "de Blob." The more colour you restore, the more stuff you unlock and more colours become available. Watching all this happen while you sit there smearing paint over buildings and landmarks while waving your arms around like a lunatic is oddly entertaining and wickedly gratifying.

Fallout 3

Platform: PS3, Xbox 360
Genre: Action RPG
Rated: M: 17+

Two hundred years after a nuclear war ravages the Earth, in the year 2277, your character escapes out into the world in search of his missing father. This is a vast, open-ended game with a flexible character-levelling system in which what you choose to do makes a difference. On your journey you'll meet other survivors, complete quests, specialize your character, and battle the countless enemies inhabiting the wasteland. This instalment of the Fallout series feels good, looks good, plays incredibly well, is awesomely interactive, and begs to be played pretty much until you go blind.

LEGO **Batman:** The Videogame

Platform: PS2, PS3, PSP, Nintendo DS, Wii, Xbox 360
Genre: Action adventure
Rated: E: 10+

It's a game you can play with your kids. Or let them play with each other. Or forget the kids and play it yourself — it's Batman and it's LEGO. Play as Batman and play as Robin. Build stuff, drive a LEGO Batmobile, swing on bat cables, and capture escaped villains like The Joker and The Penguin. Or play as the evil dudes and wage war on the good guys while spreading mayhem throughout the awesome LEGO Gotham city — whatever your age, LEGO is cool.

Left 4 **Dead**

Platform: Xbox 3
Genre: Horror, shooter
Rated: M: 17+

Mmmm... zombies. Not just zombies, but zombies versus up to four co-op human players.

Slick and stylish with undead that move faster than you'd think the undead would, Left 4 Dead really brings it. It's fun, it's creepy, and, thanks to brilliant A.I. technology, it's different every single time you play. The game tailors itself to the player's abilities. How cool is that? Seriously, is there anything in gaming better than the human struggle against hordes of swarming zombies? Yep, there IS one thing better: The Left 4 Dead co-op human struggle against hordes of swarming zombies. This is the future of co-op.

You can play as Batman or Robin in LEGO Batman: The Videogame.

Gears of **War 2**

Platform: Xbox 3
Genre: First-person shooter
Rated: M: 17+

OK, maybe there is a better gift than a flamethrower. Maybe it's a flamethrower and a chainsaw! Oh, wait. Maybe it's a flamethrower, a chainsaw, and a meat shield! You can give all this and more with Gears of War 2.

It's good. It's really good. Story goes that you and your squad have to save the world — again — but don't worry, the story isn't really where it's at. The upgraded online multi-player is awesome. Did I mention the graphics are crispy-crunchy good, which makes toasting enemies look extra hot? Don't cheap out — if you're thinking of gifting GOW2, spring for a bag of marshmallows to go with.

Little **Big Planet**

Platform: PS3
Genre: Puzzle platformer
Rated: T: Teen

The most highly anticipated game for the PS3 in 2008 is here. There's never been a game quite like this in the history of gaming goodness. In LBP, players control little yarn characters, "sackboys," who wander all over the globe. Each cute, customizable character can manipulate and interact with all the objects and environments in the game. Ambitious players can use the stunning level-creator tools to develop their own game environments and share them online. If you don't have a PS3er on your list, then you need to get one just so you can buy them LBP and go over and play it. Yep, it's *that* good.

Rayman Raving **Rabbids:** TV Party

Platform: Nintendo DS, Wii
Genre: Party
Rated: E: 10+

Party, party, party! With super-cute 3D visuals, metric tonnes of humour, great spoofs on popular TV shows and movies, and up to eight players at a time, this instalment of Rayman is jam-packed with more than 50 mini-games.

Not just regular mini-games, but the kind that get you and your kids off the couch by making use of the Wii Balance Board.

Resistance 2

Platform: PS3
Genre: First-person shooter
Rated: M: 17+

Exclusive to the PS3 and just in time for the holiday season, Resistance 2 launches with the biggest monsters ever, wicked-awesome graphics, remote-detonating Magnum ammo, eight-player dynamic campaign co-op, and one-to-60 multi-player on massive maps. If that isn't enough, it's just plain adrenaline-pumping fun. It's hugely entertaining.

Next week's lineup

GIFT GUIDES For a roundup of beauty products, tech gifts and much more, pick up Metro's next Holiday Shopping Guide on Dec. 11.

21 shopping days remain before Christmas.

Lip locked
These Yes to Carrots lip butters come in Mint, Berry or Carrot flavours. Available for $4.99 at Shoppers Drug Mart, shoppersdrugmart.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday **Shopping Guide III**

Screen gems for the holidays

RICK McGINNIS
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

The big enchiladas

The capo di tutti capi of DVD gift sets this holiday season is undeniably **HBO's Complete Sopranos box** — a bricklike reliquary in funereal black on black, with the discs housed in a hardcover book tightly shrouded in a black felt bag. The whole package is a cross between the archival and the morbid, and the prime special features are spread over two new bonus discs that include dinner chats with creator David Chase and key members of the cast and crew, as well as two fawning interviews with Chase by actor Alec Baldwin, who was never able to fulfill his dream of a role on the show.

The other big box this season is **MGM/Fox's Hollywood Musicals set**, a gaudy marquee-themed package that features 50 musicals from the 30s to the present day. The byzantine world of rights ownership means that most of MGM's signature pre-1952 musicals are missing, so Fox dominates the first of four sections of the box, which includes films like **Babes In Toyland**, **State Fair** and **Moon Over Miami**. The '50s are dominated by Rogers and Hammerstein classics like **Oklahoma** and **The King And I**, and the '60s set features a lot of Elvis movies. The final set, covering the '70s to the present, is a truly mixed bag, though a set with titles like **All That Jazz**, **The Rocky Horror Picture Show** and **Moulin Rouge** can claim to be fairly representative of the era.

Finally, Fox's successor to its landmark Ford At Fox set from last year arrives in the form of **Murnau, Borzage & Fox**, another deluxe box profiling the careers of two directors — F.W. Murnau and Frank Borzage — and studio head William Fox during the transition from silent movies to talkies. Includes the classic Murnau film **Sunrise**, as well as several other rarely-seen but brilliant films from an era unjustly overlooked even today.

The whole thing

HBO has a few big complete season collections this year, including sets for **The Wire** and **Deadwood**. There's not a lot new in The Wire set except for some prequel shorts, but the new box does slim down the show's shelf real estate. The Deadwood collection does the same, but throws in a few new bonus features, including a wander down the streets of the show's main set with creator David Milch, who is clearly unhappy with his show's premature end.

HBO also has a complete **Get Smart collection** with a simple but clever package that requires you to open a set of doors echoing the show's famous title sequence to get to the discs, which are loaded with bonus features, including a rather dark excerpt from star Don Adams' memorial service. Finally, HBO has released a slim collection of **Generation Kill**, the Iraq War miniseries from The Wire creator David Simon, probably the most successful portrait of the conflict made so far.

Looking to dominate the TV box set market, HBO has also released the World War II miniseries **Band Of Brothers** on Blu-ray, which virtually duplicates the earlier DVD offering but integrates several of the special features more seamlessly into the disc menu.

Not new but improved

The **Planet Of The Apes** films have also been given a Blu-ray upgrade in a slipcased set from Fox, which excludes the TV and animated iterations of the franchise contained in the earlier "monkey head" gift set in favour of a reverent look at the 5 Apes films as cultural artifacts of the late '60s and early '70.

The Best Picture Collection from Sony is a grab bag of Oscar-winning titles, from Frank Capra chestnuts like **It Happened One Night** and **You Can't Take It With You** through David Lean's **Lawrence Of Arabia** and **Bridge On The River Kwai** to **Kramer Vs. Kramer** and **Gandhi**. If anything, it proves how much less fun Oscar films have become over the years.

Finally, Paul Feig and Judd Apatow's brilliant-but-cancelled series **Freaks And Geeks** has been updated with a clever yearbook-themed package from Shout Factory that collects practically every outtake and screen test left over from the shows short but indelible run on TV in the fall of 1999.

Prize inside!

Several gift sets arrive packaged around collectible items, the best example of which is **Fox's Ray Harryhausen gift set**, which puts an impressively solid figurine of one of Harryhausen's stop-motion creatures together with a DVD set featuring 2-disc sets devoted to 3 of the sci-fi/monster films he made for Columbia in the '50s.

The Mystery Science Theatre 3000 20th Anniversary Edition set comes in a tin box featuring four exquisitely lousy Z-grade pictures adorned with MST3K's trademark snarky commentary and a figurine of Crow T. Robot. Warner's limited edition reissue of 300 adds an extra disc with production documentary and a slipcased book to its big prize — a 3-D lenticular Lucite block featuring a shot from Zack Snyder's film.

The best and worst of the sounds of the season

BRIAN TOWIE
brian.towie@metronews.ca

THE HITS — and misses — just keep on coming. Last week, Metro reviewed some of the best, and worst, Christmas CDs of the season, but we would be remiss in passing up this opportunity for more.

Aretha **Franklin**

Album: This Christmas
Label: DMI Records
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕⊕

The greatest singer of all time, at least according to Rolling Stone magazine, puts the spirit back into the season on her first-ever Christmas disc with strong ensembles, an 11-piece choir and a duet with her son. The 66-year-old Queen of Soul particularly shines on gospel adaptations such as The Lord Will Make A Way, Angels We Have Heard On High and Silent Night — just as you might expect from the daughter of a preacher.

Tony **Bennett**
feat. The Count Basie Band

Album: A Swingin' Christmas
Label: Sony/BMG
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕⊕

His voice reveals a man in his golden years, but Tony Bennett's natural talent for evoking fun and capturing drama in every track he sets his hand to remains evergreen. Jovial big-band arrangements back up Bennett's grandfatherly warmth here, especially on Christmas Time Is Here and My Favorite Things. This is some superb music to listen to.

Beverly **Mahood**

Album: This Christmas Celebrate Me Home
Label: BPM Entertainment
Rating: ⊕⊕

Mahood brings light licks and a saccharine voice to the old standards. She doesn't try anything risky or dynamic enough to make this CD memorable, and it's essentially just inoffensive background music.

Sarah **Brightman**

Album: A Winter Symphony
Label: EMI Music
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

Brightman puts in a good mix of old and new in this eagerly anticipated followup to her Symphony album. Orchestral backup enhances Brightman's theatrical style on hymns such as Silent Night and Amazing Grace, along with modern winter-themed ditties — among them Vince Gill's Colder Than Winter. But does an album, even one meant to help listeners celebrate Christmas, really need two versions of Ave Maria?

One to note

- Get your hands on the soundtrack to Christmas On Mars, a sci-fi feature film made by The Flaming Lips. With track names such as The Gleaming Armament Of Marching Genitalia, you'll at least freak out your folks.

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9 SHOWS SOLD OUT!

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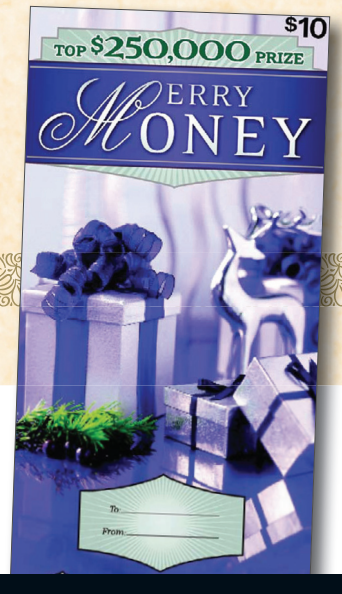
Yuletide gatherings are truly joyous.

Except for those awkward moments when someone gives you a gift and you don't have anything for them.



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All I want for Christmas

BY ENZA SUPERMODEL
enza.supermodel.anderson@gmail.com

Leah Miller

Claim to fame: MuchMusic VJ and host of So You Think You Can Dance Canada

GIFT SUGGESTION
Baked goods.

SHOPPING ADVENTURE
It's always an adventure trying to do that last-minute shopping. Fighting crowds at the mall is a bad idea!

BEST GIFT RECEIVED & WHY
A garnet cocktail ring from my Grandma Barb.

WORST GIFT RETURNED & WHY
I can't think of one! I've never returned a gift.

HOLIDAY ADVICE
Don't stress about buying presents as the holidays aren't just about that. They're about spending time with family and loved ones.

Mike Holmes

Claim to fame: HGTV's Holmes on Homes

GIFT SUGGESTION
Money is the perfect gift. If you give them money, they can pick what they want.

SHOPPING ADVENTURE
I go in. I know what I want. I get it ... and I leave. I'm not one of those people that walk around.

BEST GIFT RECEIVED & WHY
Just being with my kids. I'm the type of person that if I want something, I get it myself.

WORST GIFT RETURNED & WHY
It would be a sweater from a friend. I re-gifted and gave it to someone else.

HOLIDAY ADVICE
Keep smiling. If you don't, it's not going to be a fun experience.

Elicia MacKenzie

Claim to fame: The TV series How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria followed by the role of Maria in the Mirvish production of The Sound of Music

GIFT SUGGESTION
Something from the heart! Something that reminds you of that person or something you made. Least of all, it'll make someone feel good to know that you actually put time into thinking of them.

SHOPPING ADVENTURE
Never go to the mall unprepared! It's a jungle! I always bring a list of ideas for each person I have to buy for. Otherwise, I'm just wandering aimlessly through a crowd of screaming children and pushy people.

BEST GIFT RECEIVED & WHY
An electric piano! Unfortunately, it's back home in B.C. with my parents.

WORST GIFT RETURNED & WHY
Jumper cables, set number 3. I did leave my car lights on a couple of times ... Hmm.

HOLIDAY ADVICE
Appreciate and spend time with the people you love!

Colin & Justin

Claim to fame: Colin & Justin's Home Heist on HGTV

GIFT SUGGESTION
We adore EVERYTHING by Kiehls. And their candles are particularly awesome. Whatever you buy this Christmas, make sure a Forrest Rain candle is on the list. It's the loveliest, freshest smell you'll ever sniff. We're also massive champagne fiends, and our motto is: "A day without champagne is like a day without sunshine."

SHOPPING ADVENTURE
We went to Times Square in New York a couple of Christmases ago. The lights were awesome and we stayed in a Philippe Starck hotel, which was gorgeous beyond belief. Dominic Monaghan from Lost was there too and he was the sweetest guy ever. He knows a Scottish friend of ours called Stuart and that was a real ice breaker. We partied in Greenwich Village with family and spent so much money on gifts that we had to wire our bank in Britain to bail us out.

Then we missed our flight home and couldn't rebook our hotel as it was, by that point, full. So, we had to call up a friend (with whom we hadn't been in contact for five years) in a suburb called Larchmont and ask if we could stay over. After two awkward nights, we flew back to Britain, then on to Mauritius for our annual holiday. We partied on the beach with Nelson Mandela, who always stays there for New Year's. Fact! We had New Year's lunch with Faye Dunaway to wrap it all up! A gorgeous star-studded holiday period!

BEST GIFT RECEIVED & WHY
We bought each other Chanel J12 watches as Christmas gifts last year. We have matching models in complementary white and black and they are gorgeous! Hey, we've worked hard...

WORST GIFT RETURNED & WHY
We are lucky enough to say that most of our friends know us well enough to give us appropriate gifts! Everyone knows we LOVE LOVE LOVE scented candles (hint!) of any variety so it's difficult to miss the mark!

HOLIDAY ADVICE
Get your shopping done before the crowds go crazy! And eat, drink, and be merry when the party starts! Everything in moderation never hurt anybody! However, never drink and drive and always make sure you have a clean conscience over the holidays. Kick back, relax and start planning those New Year's resolutions!!

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STARTS SATURDAY
STANLEY INDUSTRIAL ALLIANCE STAGE
From $25
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New for the holidays
This Winter Berries hand care duo also comes with a ceramic base. This new fragrance from Fruits & Passion is available for $28. For more, go to fruits-passion.com. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide III

Dreaming of a Blu-ray Christmas

RICK McGINNIS
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

Toshiba XD-E300 upconverting DVD player ($129.99)

Toshiba was the loser in the high-def disc wars last year, supporting the (to my eyes, superior) HD-DVD format. They're not willing to run up the white flag and surrender yet, which brings us to the XD-E500, their latest generation of upconverting DVD players, introduced to the market with the assumption that there are enough consumers with DVD libraries out there unwilling to swap them for Blu-ray at notable cost.

The XD-E500 is essentially an upconverting player that allows the viewer control over aspects of image control to give the impression of a sharper, more vivid DVD picture on high-def screens. If you're at all familiar with image editing programs like Photoshop, you'll have no problem understanding how the XD-E500 tweaks sharpness, contrast and saturation to squeeze every bit of juice out of a 480i image upconverted to 1080p. The one major improvement I noticed was the ability of the player to tightly render patterns that would have been jangled, moiré-pattern messes on regular DVD. Be warned — the XD-E500 doesn't put out true HD, but it comes as close as DVD will go, at a very reasonable price.

Panasonic DMP-BD35 ($349.99)

Samsung BD-P1500 Blu-ray player ($299.99)

Sony BDP S350 ($299.99)

As Blu-ray players start bearing down on the magic $200 price point (keep your eyes peeled during Boxing Week), these three machines will probably end up on somebody's wish list. Since winning the format war, there hasn't been a lot of movement in the basic specs of Blu-ray players, but one major improvement is load time — all three players tested here improved the load time on previous generations of machines, the clear winner being the Sony machine.

Sony was the most improved of all the players — previous Sony machines I've tested have been sluggish, and rejected discs with alacrity, but the BDP S350 was the best performer of the bunch, with the nicest interface and performance. All three machines feature Ethernet jacks for online firmware updates and possible BD-Live interactivity, which is good to see, since this was often missing on Blu-ray players during the format war.

The Panasonic's main flaw is the load time — the slowest of the three — and the price, which needs to be more competitive. The Samsung is a fine machine, but the review unit I had went through a frustrating series of malfunctions, not recognizing commands from either the remote or the buttons on the unit itself, or throwing up the "Bonus View" icon onscreen with no option to shut it off.

Blu-ray players, from top left: Sony BDP S350, Samsung BD-P1500, and Panasonic DMP-BD35.

LG Scarlet 42LG60 LCD TV ($1,999.99)

The flat panel TV market has reached a sort of plateau of quality, at least when you're shopping for brand name sets — picture quality is uniformly good, even excellent, now that full 1080p is pretty much standard above a certain screen size, and as a result you're likely to be picking a unit based on criterion like features and aesthetics.

In terms of aesthetics, it's hard to beat the LG Scarlet line, and especially the very sculptural 42LG60 unit, with its black lacquer with red accents and the big, backlit circular hole that functions as power button and status indicator. It's not the sort of machine that you'll hide in some home entertainment cupboard — it practically begs to be wall-mounted, especially since the wide lower "chin" adds so much height to its profile.

The picture quality is superb, with a room light sensor that adjusts for ambience, and four HDMI units for gamers.

Neat treats for him

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Visit: homesense.ca
This golf bag drink shaker set is available for $29.99 at HomeSense.

#2 For the man on the go
Visit: shoppersdrugmart.ca
The Real Shaving Co. Travel Kit ($16.99) includes skincare products.

#3 Smooth moves
Visit: philips.com
This Philips Nivea for Men Shaver ($109.99) features a lotion dispenser.

#4 Wash and wear
Available across Canada.
Old Spice gift set ($10.99) includes Classic Cologne and Classic After-Shave.

#5 F/P Homme Gift Set
Visit: fruits-passion.com
Gift set ($45) includes shower gel, after shave, body spray and photo box.

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everything from A to Z

A cracking good time
Have some fun before dinner with these holiday crackers. Available from $9.99 at chapters.indigo.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide III

Spread some Christmas cheer

#1 Harajuku fragrances

Visit: shoppersdrugmart.ca
Love, Baby, Music, Lil' Angel, and G are $49/30 mL, or $62 for a set (5 x 10 mL).

#2 Bejewelled ballet flats

Phone: 1-800-653-6289
Visit: oldnavy.ca
Make her feet sparkle with bejewelled flats ($26.50).

#3 Stepping it up

Visit: ecco.com
Elista leather and suede boots in retro red, $275. They are also available in black.

#4 18k white gold & silver charms

Phone: 1-800-843-3269
Visit: tiffany.ca
These white gold and sterling silver charms range in price from $140 to $2,400.

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Cool toys for boys

#1 BEN 10 Alien Force
At Wal-Mart, Toys R Us, Zellers
DNA Alien Hero Wildvine ($9.99), left, and Swampfire ($5.99).

#2 Durable DVD player
Visit: toyexpress.ca
Kid-Tough Portable DVD Player, $170. Can survive drop after drop after drop!

#3 Wooden wheels
Visit: babythoughts.ca
Vilac Yellow Wooden Van, $34.95, and Vilac Mini Red Rally Car, $14.95.

#4 For the Batman fan
Visit: toyexpress.ca
Dark Knight Stealth Launch Batmobile with missiles, $49.99.

#5 Thomas train set
Visit: chapters.indigo.ca
Thomas the Tank Engine Lift & Load Set, $299 (online exclusive price).

#6 Xbox controllers
Visit: xbox.com
Xbox 360 wireless controllers in blue, $49.99, and red, $64.99.

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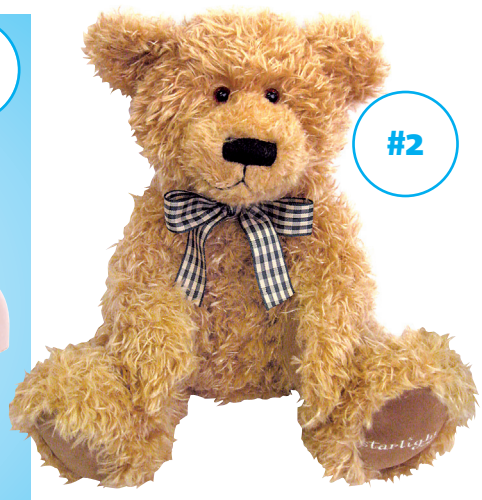
All she wants for Christmas



#1 Sweet vintage
Visit: homesense.ca
This vintage-inspired children's pedal car ($169.99) is available at HomeSense.

#2 Fuzzy Thomas Bear
Visit: starlightcanada.org
Proceeds from this $20 bear go to the Starlight Starbright Children's Foundation.

#3 Tamagotchi returns
At Wal-Mart, Toys R Us, Zellers
Tamagotchi Connection V5 Celebrity Familitchi, $15.99. Colours/patterns vary.

#4 Eco-chic bedding
Visit: GrassrootsStore.com
Organic cotton kids bedding, $60-$240. Made in North America.

#5 Bratz Familiez
Visit: bratz.com
Bratz World Familiez Cloe and Her Sister dolls, $19.99.

#6 Plush Fifi doll
Visit: www.toysrus.ca
This Fifi and the Flowertots Lullaby Plush ($24.99) is at Toys R Us.

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3565 Kingsway
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Metro Homes

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Clear the deck before decking the halls

UrbanDweller
Carlyn Yandle

carlyn.yandle@metronews.ca

If you've been following this column, you'll know this is the third installment in my plan for clearing the decks before the holiday season. If you're following the plan, you may have a small mountain of filled, labelled file boxes in what used to be your dining room — and mounting anxiety.

Don't despair; this is all part of getting back the nice home you deserve. Wipe out all other commitments for one day (take a sick day if you have to), grab a pack of clear jumbo plastic bags and a trusted friend, and get down to those four categories of boxes: Keep; Throw Away (for trash or recycling); Give Away (to friends or Goodwill); and I Don't Know.

Start with the "Throw Away" stack. You'll notice that everything inside is truly junk. Nobody wants broken things and parts of other things. Throw any paper into one clear jumbo bag (rip up any personal info), any other recyclables in another, and the rest in a trash bag. Keep those big bags nearby; you're not through with them yet.

Move onto the "Give Away" stack. Take a big breath and remind yourself that holding onto every old thing is verging into hording territory,

CARLYN YANDLE PHOTO

Giving some of your household treasures as gifts is an important part of the de-clutter process. This vintage teacup set and handmade doily packaged up with some quality loose-leaf tea and a shiny new teaball makes a thoughtful gift.

which got you into this whole mess. Know that you will not love your sister any less if you part with a craft she made you in 1992. Unless you deem any "treasures" particularly significant to your being, decide who might enjoy them more. Set them aside for gifting. Re-designate some newly empty file boxes as "Gift for Friends of the Library" and fill them with all good-condition, current-interest and quality books and magazines, DVDs and CDs. Say bye-bye to the remaining dust-collectors as you place them in a goodwill bag for someone else to discover.

The "I Don't Know" collection inevitably includes a lot of wires and cables — sort into a box labelled something appropriate like "Electronic Bits" and store — and important-looking documents and receipts. (Store in a labelled box to be dealt with later.) Quickly move the leftovers into an appropriate jumbo bag.

Finally, attack the "Keep" stack. Your trusted friend can help you quickly decide what's really a keeper. Keep filling those goodwill and recycling bags. Release things into the world to create space for new energy to flow into your home and life.

Once all the stacks of boxes have been sorted, drag the bags and boxes to the front door to remind you to take one with you as you leave. Bring the library boxes to any branch during and the goodwill bags to a thrift store only during opening hours.

Next week: Staging your own new-found space like a pro.

Carlyn Yandle is a Vancouver journalist with her own room-planning business, Home Reworks, homereworks.com.

Rental Assistance Program

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Does your family make less than $35,000? Do you have at least one dependent child? Call BC Housing at **604-433-2218** or **1-800-257-7756** to find out if your family qualifies for rental assistance.

www.bchousing.org

HOUSING MATTERS

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It may be cheaper to pay a realtor than sell your home by yourself

HouseLeague
Ryan DeLuca

ryan.deluca@metronews.ca

FSBO; otherwise known as For Sale Bye Owner is a means of selling your home on your own without the aid of a licensed realtor. While this may seem a great way to save money there are many disadvantages as to why these types of listings may end up costing you in the end.

One of the biggest advantages to using a realtor is the benefit of the Multiple Listing Service. This is an online database containing most properties that are for sale through licensed realtors. In fact, websites such as realtor.ca (formerly mls.ca) are where the majority of home buyers will find properties they are interested in viewing and subsequently purchasing. This is especially important for out of town investors and purchasers who are unable to drive around looking for that new home or investment.

It is also important to consider the type of market you are trying to sell in. Most buyers will use a realtor when making a purchase. The safety of a knowledgeable professional who can guide them toward a wise purchase is a logical choice for any buyer. If you are listing your own property in a slow market that is flooded with listings and lacking in buyers, you will be cutting out a large segment of an already small market. Realtors working with buyers expect to be paid a commission for their work. Some realtors may assume if the property is for sale by owner, a commission will not be paid. Whether this is true or not, it may in turn make it more difficult for you to attract a buyer.

Finally, you must consider the length of time it will take to sell the property. One thing most vendors fail to remember is that the longer it takes to sell the home, the more carrying costs you will incur. Mortgage payments, electric bills, gas bills, etc. can add up over the months. Realtors will usually sell a home significantly faster and for more money than those sold by the owner. In the end, the amount of money you believe you can save by listing your own home can end up dwindling down.

Ryan DeLuca is a realtor with Sotheby's International Realty Canada in Vancouver, and host of The Real Estate Minute on Novus TV.

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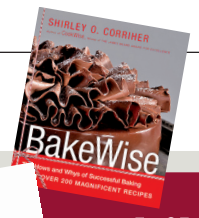
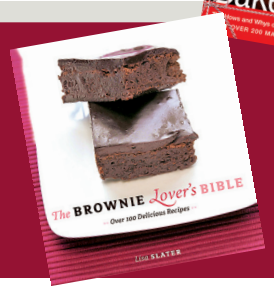
Highly anticipated
BakeWise: The Hows and Whys of Successful Baking by Shirley O. Corriher (Simon & Schuster Publishing, $47) is the only non-Canadian cookbook on this page. Written by the author of CookWise, this follow-up book has been very much anticipated by foodies everywhere. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**



Food

"Who doesn't like a rich chocolate brownie every now and then?"

Barb Holland/for Metro Canada



A bible

The Brownie Lover's Bible by Lisa Slater (Whitecap Books, $25) features more than 100 modern and classic brownie-inspired recipes, taking the brownie to a whole new level.

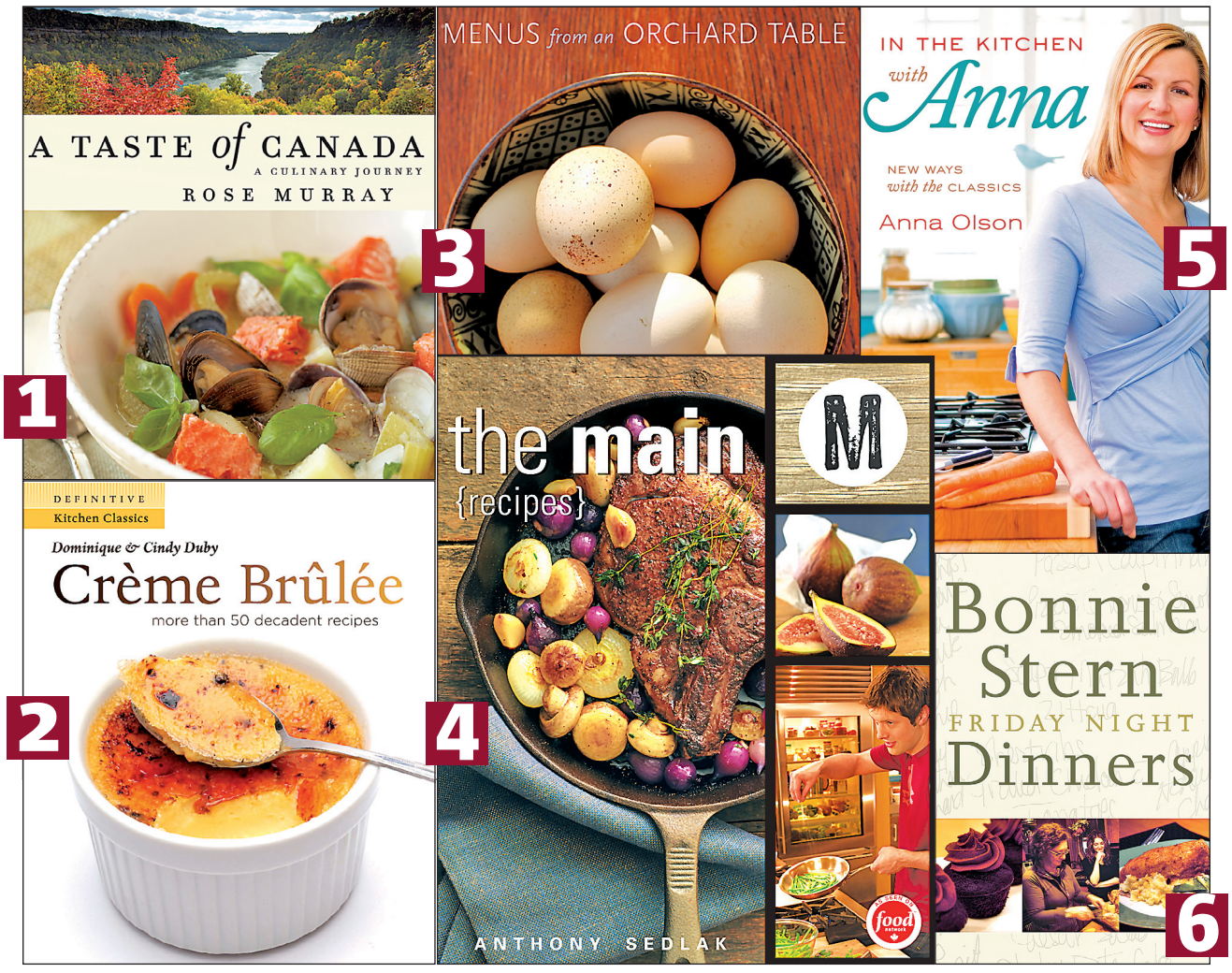
EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

Welcome to the book buffet

À **la** carte

Barb Holland
Metro Food Writer

Each fall a fresh crop of Canadian cookbooks are produced in time for the big gift-giving season. Despite the economic gloom, there is much to appreciate in our vast country and it has been a productive and bountiful year for cookbook authors. All but one of the books on this page feature homegrown talent.



Cookbooks fall from the sky during autumn — just in time for the gift-giving season. Check out this fresh Canadian talent.

1 A Taste of Canada, A Culinary Journey by Rose Murray (Whitecap Books $35):

This volume shows us just how distinctive Canada cuisine really is and how our land, climate and people shape it.

With beautiful food and landscape photography, it is much more than a cookbook. It is historical, anecdotal, a travelogue and a wonderful read. Here is a lovely coffee table book that will also make it to the kitchen — often.

2 Crème Brûlée: More Than 50 Decadent Recipes by Dominique and Cindy Duby (Whitecap Books $20):

This is an extensive single subject book as it explores the history of crème brûlée; the science of making of crème brûlée; basic ingredients and equipment requirements; the cooking process; sweet and savoury alternatives; and wine pairings.

The Dubys are chocolatiers, chefs, and founders and owners of the acclaimed chocolate atelier and virtual boutique Wild Sweets. If your recipient has a sense of adventure (and humor), give this with a bag of sugar and a mini blowtorch.

3 Menus from an Orchard Table, Celebrating the Food & Wine of the Okanagan by Heidi Noble (Whitecap Books, $35):

This book is a collection of seasonal recipes from Joie Wines and Farm Cooking School's renowned outdoor orchard dinners. The recipes are divided into the courses and matched with regional wines.

4 The Main: Recipes by Anthony Sedlak (Whitecap Books, $30):

This release is the accompanying book to the same named show on the Food Network.

Sedlak chooses one ingredient as the focus for a variety of dishes and creates dinner menus around it. Timing is everything when planning and executing a dinner, so the timing tips for the 45 menus is helpful.

5 In the Kitchen with Anna: New Ways with the Classics, by Anna Olson (Whitecap Books, $30):

Like the one before, this book also accompanies Olson's latest Food Network series, providing refreshing takes on dishes that have stood the test of time. Whether improving the nutritional value of a dish or finding faster ways to create the same flavours, the classics are reinvented with home kitchens in mind.

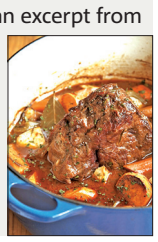
6 Friday Night Dinners by Bonnie Stern (Random House Canada, $50):

This is the latest cookbook by this well-known Canadian cooking teacher and author. Bonnie celebrates Friday night dinner as the way to start the weekend with menus for every season and occasion, holidays, barbecues, fast suppers and feasts. Bonnie's son Mark took the photographs, providing a very rustic, homey feel, just right for dinners for family and friends.

On the web

Try before you buy?

- For a recipe of Braised Beef with Caramelized Root Vegetables, an excerpt from A Taste of Canada: A Culinary Journey by Rose Murray, visit *metronews.ca*.



Barb Holland is a professional home economist and food writer who believes in shopping locally and in season.

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Urban Foodie

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Little bites, lots of wine on Granville

ANYA LEVYKH
anya@telus.net

The Refinery
1117 Granville St.
Vancouver
604-687-8001
therefineryvancouver.com
Signature Drink:
Manhattan
Signature Dish:
Cannellini Humus
Rating: ●●½
Wine & bites for 2: $80

I was a frequent visitor here when this was still The Sugar Refinery. There's still no kitchen, at least, not much of one. In fact, although the concept is labelled as a "market-style eatery," "food-optional speakeasy" might be more accurate. We were a bit peeved to find no hot food on the menu and didn't think we were unreasonable to assume that if an establishment labels itself as an "eatery," then it means that one could go there to actually, you know, eat.

On the web

- Read the full article online at *metronews.ca/vancouver/columns*.
- Chew more on Anya's blog at *metronews.ca/vancouver/blogs*.

We started with St. Maure brulée ($12). This turned out to be a tasty, but small slice of bruléed chevre (the St. Maure) with beets and lemony frisée. The daily pâté ($12) had two versions, velvety rich porcini and portobello, and nicely textured pork that could have used more flavour. Poached figs with Serrano ham and a tiny amount of crumbled gruyere ($12) was disappointing.

The servers are delightful, the room is pretty, it looks like a restaurant, but is really just a wine bar with banquet seating. And there's nothing wrong with that, really, apart from the fact that they say they're open for dinner. And there just isn't any.

ANYA LEVYKH/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Beef carpaccio with lemon frisée, mushrooms and chips.

Puglia's grapes aren't so primitivo

This southeastern region of Italy borders the Adriatic and Ionian seas. It's southern portion, Salento, makes up the "high heel" of Italy's boot. The primitivo varietal grown here is the precursor of the red zinfandel planted all over California, and is famous for its blackberry, anise and pepper notes. Try the 2006 35° Parallelo Primitivo del Salento I.G.T. from Casa Sant'Orsola, $9.99 at BCLS. Best with braised or grilled meats, game, spicy cheese and pasta with meat or mushroom sauce.

Dining out

Á LA CARTE NOUVEAU
Parkside Restaurant (1906 Haro St) has switched their prix fixe menu to a very reasonable a la carte selection. There is also a six-course chef's tasting menu for $65, as well as a holiday lunch menu running Dec. 9 to 19. Call 604-683-6912 or visit *parksiderestaurant.ca* for more information.

BRAISE AND BEER
Every Tuesday, Fuel Restaurant (1944 West 4 Ave.) will be featuring a different braised meat dish prepared with the beers from Vancouver's own R&B microbrewery. Each week's feature dish will cost $26 to $28 and includes a glass of R&B beer. Call 604-288-7905 or visit *fuelrestaurant.ca*.

In brief

CHEF TINA FINEZA of Flying Tiger has added on the exec chef role at Abigail's Party to her roster. Fineza's also done consulting gigs for Les Faux Bourgeois and Habit Lounge.
SHANGI-LA'S dream team for Market by Jean-Georges (open in January) now includes David Foot as exec. chef, Wayne Harris as exec. sous chef, and Robert Stelmachuk as sommelier. METRO VANCOUVER

Wines that start with robust awards and finish with subtle notes of I-can't-believe-the-price.

From $8.95 to $34.95, Jackson-Triggs has wines that are suited to any holiday gathering. Voted Best Canadian Winery an unprecedented 19 times in global competitions, most recently by *Wine Access* and the International Wine and Spirits Competition, London, England, you can be confident you're serving wines of exceptional quality and value. Discover them at BC Liquor Stores, private retailers and our winery in the Okanagan Valley.

Bring on the night.

Please enjoy responsibly. jacksontriggswinery.com

Royal treatment at the shopping mall

U.S. retailers hope to put shoppers in a merry enough mood to shop amid economic tough times by decking the halls, stocking up with brightly coloured merchandise, even lining up employees at the door to applaud customers as they enter the store. **REUTERS**

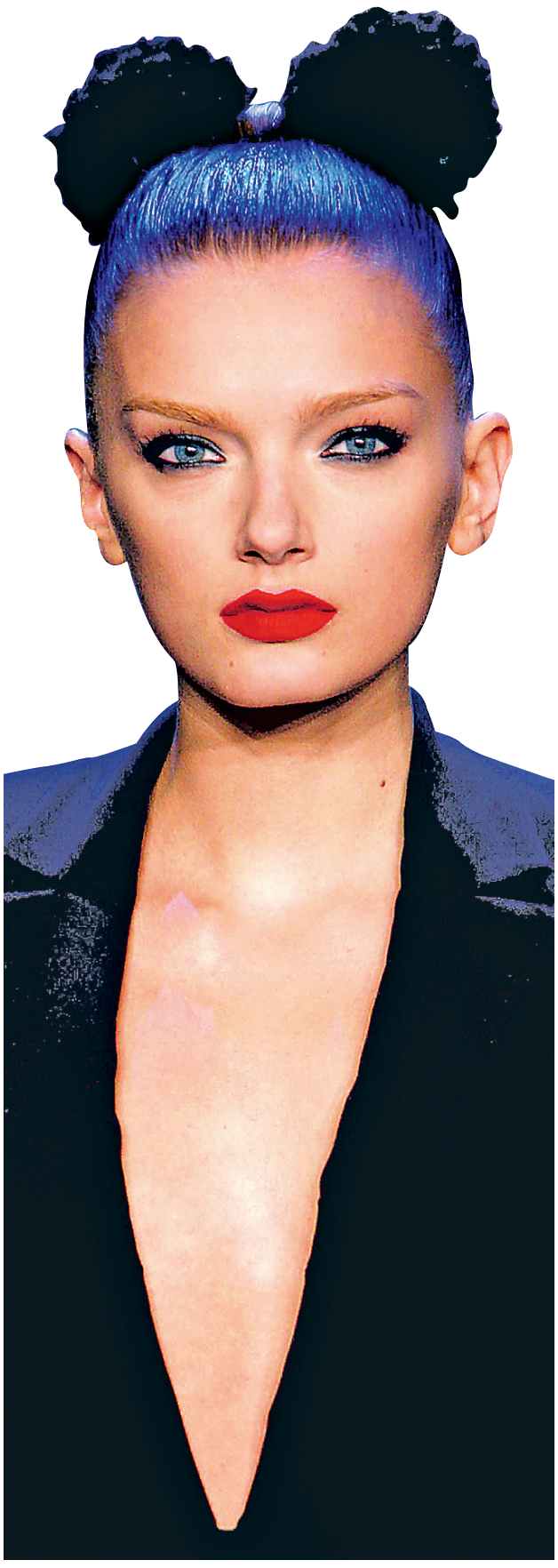
Style

Hutton's hot comeback

At 64, Lauren Hutton is giving the young crop of It models competition in ad campaigns. In addition to starring in the autumn/winter ads for Mango, Hutton will appear in the campaign for Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen's line, Elizabeth and James. "She's older and she's beautiful, and that is sexy to us," Contactmusic.com quotes Ashley as saying. Hutton also modelled with Mary-Kate in an editorial spread in Harper's Bazaar earlier this year.

KENYA HUNT/FOR METRO CANADA

GETTY IMAGES



Bold red lips is an easy trend to pull off. But it's not for the shy, if you ask Talia Shobrook, who's behind Sarah Jessica Parker's makeup.

Rock a bold mouth in red

This season's big trend is an easy one to pull off

KENYA HUNT
for Metro Canada

In the world of beauty, the cold weather months are all about a bold, head-turning mouth.

Red and fuchsia lips popped up all over the runways and unlike the jet-black pouts that surfaced at Yves Saint Laurent, crimson colors are much more flattering. So how can one wear the trend from day-to-day without looking completely overdone?

• **THE KEY TO CARRYING OFF** a strong lip is to keep everything else simple, as obviously the lips are the focus, says says makeup artist Talia Shobrook, who is the woman responsible for Amy Winehouse's trademark cat-eyes. Her clients also include Sarah Jessica Parker, Kate Bosworth and Mischa Barton, to name a few.

• **GO EASY ON THE SKIN** make-up to avoid looking "cakey." Foundation should be light and flawless. Instead of brightening the face with blush, just keep the skin dewy. Otherwise, it will look too heavy. And the eyes should be neutral and eyebrows softly defined and filled in, she adds.

• **CHOOSE A MATTE CONSISTENCY** for a younger, cooler look, rather than a glossy or lustrous version, Shobrook says.

• **BUT MOST OF ALL,** wear it with confidence — this is not for the shy — and voila you're rocking a current trend straight off the runway, she adds.

Picking the right color

If you have: **Pale skin with pink undertones**
Try: **Blue-based reds**

If you have: **Asian skin tones**
Try: **Berry reds**

If you have: **Olive skin with yellow undertones**
Try: **Gold-based reds**

If you have: **Dark brown skin tones**
Try: **Warm crimsons or burgundy**

7 great red and fuchsia lip colors for fall

$14 The Body Shop
The Body Shop Lip Colour in Soft Red
thebodyshop.ca

$21 Benefit
Benefit's Flirt Alert in Candy Apple
benefitcosmetics.com

$9.50 Revlon
Revlon Matte Lipstick in In The Red
revlon.com

$16.50 MAC
M.A.C. lipstick in Lady Danger
maccosmetics.com

$18 Clinique
Clinique High Impact Lip Colour SPF 15 in Red-y to Wear
clinique.ca

$26 Clarins
Clarins Joli Rouge in Clarins Red
clarins.com

$8.99 CoverGirl
CoverGirl IncrediFull in Fresh Jam
covergirl.ca

NO TERM CONTRACT NECESSARY

the new fido

High stakes and high-speed fashion contest
VIA Rail Canada and the Fashion Design Council of Canada have started a contest to restyle the VIA Rail uniform for station and on-train employees. The winner will receive $10,000 in VIA travel credits and debut their design at Toronto Fashion Week. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

A dash of retro glam

Ladylike pieces that channel '40s and '50s elegance help complete a chic evening look

LAURA LEE FULHAM
for Metro Canada

Flower pins in leopard, green and purple, Le Château, $18 each.

Black bow clutch, Only Accessories, approx. $50. (Call 416-504-7070 for availability.).

Hibiscus print blouse, Esprit, $74.50 (Available at 1-866-4ESPRIT)

Black wool-blend swing coat, Le Château, $150.

Black T-strap shoes, JLO Exclusively at Town Shoes, $120. (For availability visit *townshoes.com*.)

Pewter metallic belt, Le Château,$29.95.

Cocktail ring, Le Château, $19.95. (For all Le Château items pictured, please check local stores for availability. To find a store location, visit *lechateau.com*.)

Black recycled wool skirt, H&M, $69.90 (For stores and availability visit *hm.com*.)

Stay in with sleepwear and slippers

Style **File**

Kim Elbo
kim.elbo@gmail.com

ask kim

I'm looking to personalize a gift and would like to get it embroidered. Where can I go to get this done?

Some department stores and home decor stores such as Restoration Hardware offer monogram embroidery for a small price, but they may have a limited selection of styles and fonts. If the store where you bought your gift does not offer the service you're looking for, head to Justin Stitches on Granville Island (1648 Duranleau St.).

E-mail your style questions to *kim.elbo@gmail.com.*

Vancouver's Kim Elbo has a passion for fashion. Here she shares the latest style tips.

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt
Exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle

Tiered Ruffles
Designer: La Senza
Shop: La Senza
Address: Various locations
lasenza.com

Sweet Stripes
Designer: Spreegirl
Shop: BeautyMark
beautymark.ca

See-through Aqua
Designer: La Vie en Rose
Shop: La Vie en Rose
Address: Various locations
lavieenrose.com

Bootie
Designer: La Vie en Rose
Shop: La Vie en Rose
Address: Various locations
lavieenrose.com

Knit Shoe
Designer: American Eagle
Shop: American Eagle
Address: Various locations
ae.com

Slip-on
Designer: Bonjour Fleurette
Shop: Fine Finds
finefindsboutique.com

psst... Fierce! Christian Siriano, the winner of Project Runway's fourth-season contest, will design his first-ever footwear and handbag collection; available exclusively at select Payless stores across Canada in Fall '09.

Sleepwear

Leave the fireplace on and stay comfy and cozy in bed with these three camisole sets. Like to keep things hot in bed? Search for fabrics like cashmere, wool or cotton to stay warm all night. Finer fabrics like silks will keep you cooler in bed if you like it a little chilly. Remember when you're getting out of bed, you might want to cover up quickly so look out for a dressing gown or a house coat the next time you're out shopping for sleepwear.

Stressed? Take a bath and relax with Soap & Glory's Calm One Calm All double-function formula bubbling bath soak and built-in lotion. Available at Shoppers Drug Mart for $10.

Slippers

We all know how chilly our feet can get during the winter months, and when you're at home it's even worse with hardwood or tiled flooring, so keep warm with slippers. Pamper your pieds with a pair complete with sole padding and thick knits to surround your feet in comfortable socks. Or go for slip-ons for easy access like the Bonjour Fleurette slipper. Look for rubber soles — if you're prone to slipping — and washable versions.

Tip: Before climbing into a bath, fill your bathroom sink with hot water. Then place your body lotion in the hot water. When you get out of your bath, your lotion will be nice and warm. — *tipztime.com*

Project Runway Canada to return
The 2008 Gemini Award Winning reality TV series Project Runway Canada returns for an all-new season on Global Television, with encore performances on SLICETM, on Jan. 27. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Entertainment

The greatest

Brad Pitt's enigmatic Fight Club antihero Tyler Durden has been crowned the Greatest Movie Character of All Time by Empire magazine.

IMDB.COM

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

Britney morphs again

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MusicReviews

music@metronews.ca

Neil Young

Album: Sugar Mountain, Live at Canterbury House 1968
Label: Reprise/Warner
Rating: ◍◍◍◍◍

THIS IS A HAPPIER, more innocent Neil Young than the slow-talking introvert we heard on the 1971 Massey Hall concert that was released last year as part of his performance series. Here, he's laughing with the crowd, exchanging jokes, riffing on Classical Gas and telling wild stories about getting fired from a Coles book store for eating little red diet pills. Recorded in gleaming two-track stereo (voice on left, guitar on right), the 14 songs are drawn mainly from his underappreciated self-titled debut — the concert was recorded at an Ann Arbor coffee house the week of its release. There's also a few Buffalo Springfield classics, like Out of My Mind, Mr. Soul, and Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing. True Neil Young fans will go gaga for the title track, his boyhood ode to Sugar Mountain, as well as the surrealist saga, Last Trip To Tulsa and the beautiful, but rarely heard, Old Laughing Lady.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Akon

Album: Freedom
Label: SRC/Universal
Rating: ◍◍◍½

JUST WHEN FANS have come to expect hit-making hip-hop from Atlanta-based rapper Akon, the controversial musician has gone euro-pop. That's right – on his third record Akon employs a bevy of synths, disco beats and an auto-tuned, pitch perfect voice that does far more singing than rhyming. It's not a bad move for the R&B star - the tunes are catchy, relaxed and, most importantly, different than what he's done before. Some of the lyrics, which are mostly about love, are over the top, but it's still a solid effort for this now veteran performer.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Britney Spears

Album: Circus
Label: Jive/Sony
Rating: ◍◍◍½

THE WORLD IS certainly a very freaky place. First Michael Jackson morphed physically into Diana Ross. Now, Britney Spears is morphing musically into Madonna. Maybe there was some kind of tongue-to-tongue gene transference in that liplock Madonna threw on Britney a couple of years back. With the aid a phalanx of producers armed with the latest computer gadgetry to bolster her otherwise limp voice, Britney has managed to put together a decent pop/dance album. It's not as good as last year's surprising Blackout released when Brits was still loony as two sackfuls of cats. But no one cared to listen back then, so this will probably be praised as Britney's greatest ... ever ... further contributing to the bizarre reconstruction of this troubled pop star into the heiress of the Material Girl's legacy. Ugh. She's even dressing like her.

Graham Rockingham /for Metro Canada

Los Campesinos!

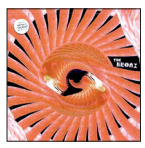
Album: We Are Beautiful, We Are Doomed
Label: Arts & Crafts
Rating: ◍◍◍◍

AS IF THE HYPER shout-fests and messy pop squeals that marked last April's Hold On Now, Youngster ... weren't enough. Some eight months later — you read that correctly! — a follow-up arrives that stabilizes said hyperactivity but maintaining a no-less-frenetic pace. Cramming every nook and cranny with a better organized mix of violins, guitars and glockenspiel, Gareth, Aleksandra et al barrel through 10 diary-like entries of an energetic youthful existence filled with equal parts lyrical romanticism and sarcasm.

Ian Nathanson/for Metro Canada

The Bronx

Album: The Bronx III
Label: White Drugs/Distort
Rating: ◍◍◍½



THINK EARLY GUNS N' ROSES epitomized the dark underbelly of Los Angeles? One listen to the larynx-tearing primal screams of Matt Caughthran and his no-frills punk rock backers from L.A. might change your view. Although the third self-titled outing often veers towards the hard-rock bite of a melodic Motörhead, there's still some Black Flag-like brute force that lingers throughout. After 34 minutes, you'll either feel cathartic or resist all urges to shout back ever again.

Ian Nathanson/for Metro Canada

Rivers Cuomo

Album: Alone II
Label: ADGC/Universal
Rating: ◍◍◍½

LAST YEAR RIVERS CUOMO, the conflicted Weezer frontman, gave fans a treat — a collection of unreleased demos. Well, now he's giving us more. The second installment in his "Alone" series offers up another batch of loose, somewhat lo-fi tracks that actually rival any of his band's more recent albums. Unlike some demo discs, this doesn't show Cuomo experimenting — it's got all the fuzzy downstrokes and layered harmony that's made him popular. The best part isn't the tunes, though, it's the Harvard grad's relaxed, playful demeanor. If only he was having as much fun in his day job.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Polanski asks for charges dropped
Filmmaker Roman Polanski has filed a request asking a judge in Los Angeles to dismiss child-molestation charges against him, 30 years after he fled the U.S. to escape prosecution. IMDB.COM

Singer Brandy breaks 4-year recording hiatus

You can't blame Brandy for being a little nervous stepping back into the recording studio.

Four years have elapsed since the release of the R&B/pop singer's fourth album, Afrodisiac. And it has been just two years since her headline-making car accident in which another driver died.

"Once you get into a zone, it's hard to come out," says Brandy, who will not face criminal charges but still faces a wrongful-death lawsuit that goes to trial in April.

"What I experienced in the past couple of years was tough, but I had to face it and find the strength to move forward. Connecting back with music has definitely helped me through everything. Once I got back in the studio, the butterflies went away."

Music's uplifting power provided the thematic undercurrent for her new album, Human, due Dec. 9 from Koch/Epic. The project reunites Brandy with songwriter/producer Rodney Jerkins, who first worked with the singer on her 1998 multiplatinum sophomore set, Never Say Never. Jerkins, the executive producer of Human, also produced the first two singles: The uptempo Right Here (Departed) and Long Distance, a ballad co-produced with Bruno Mars.

SCOTT GRIES/GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO
Brandy has co-written several songs on her new album.

"We have great musical chemistry," Jerkins says. "Departed was the first song we did together after reuniting. And that says a lot: Most of the time you don't find the single until you're at the end of a project."

Brandy co-wrote several songs on the album, including Fall with Epic labelmate Natasha Bedingfield.

The lyrics drew inspiration from a daily journal Brandy began keeping.

"Getting in touch with how I felt made me want to sing about it," Brandy says. "This entire album is about life and what we all experience — that we're not alone and sometimes need to be uplifted."

In addition to touring to support the new album, she plans to pursue more acting roles. "That's another part of me that has to be fulfilled," says Brandy. "I really want to get back to that, creating a character who people would love to see every week." REUTERS

Bonnaroo sets dates for 2009

CONCERT The eighth Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival will take place June 11-14, 2009, on its usual site in Manchester, Tenn., an hour southeast of Nashville.

The first round of ticket presales begins today.

The initial batch of tickets will be available for the first time as part of a payment plan encompassing five installments of $50.

REUTERS

Amy's husband back in prison

Amy Winehouse's husband Blake Fielder-Civil is being sent back to prison, just one month after he was released into rehab, People.com reports his lawyer as saying.

"I can confirm he has been recalled," says Fielder-Civil's lawyer Kate Anderson, declining to state the reason. (A source close to Fielder-Civil tells People that he failed a drug test.)

The 26-year-old, who was sentenced to 27 months on charges of assault and attempting to pervert the course of justice, had been in rehab as part of his early release.

Anderson tells People that "the position on recall is that you then serve the remainder of the sentence" — meaning Fielder-Civil would remain in jail until 2010.

The U.K.'s Sun newspaper also reports that Fielder-Civil ran away from the rehab facility Tuesday night to visit his estranged wife.

Winehouse, 25, remains hospitalized in London as part of her ongoing treatment, her rep told People earlier this week.

Fielder-Civil "turned up in hospital and hell broke loose," according to The Sun's source. "He was asking Amy to forgive him."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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We've got inexpensive fixes for every room that won't torpedo your budget. It's easy to make simple improvements that look like they were done by a pro.

Kitchen – The kitchen is one room that can take a lot of colour, so take a cue from the Europeans and paint your walls. Update the sink with an elegant gooseneck faucet, or buy new breakfast stools or a rolling butcher block. Stash appliances in cupboards and leave out one statement piece: a vintage breadbox, an old-fashioned scale or a trio of quirky tins.

Living Room – New window treatments can be more economical than you think. Look into ready-made panels that can be customized by ironing on a grosgrain border with fusable tape in an accent colour. If you are handy with a sewing machine, buy yardage at inexpensive discount fabric stores and make them yourself.

(continued online...)

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Keanu may return for third Speed film

Movie executives at 20th Century Fox are reaching out to Keanu Reeves to reprise his Jack Traven character for a third Speed film, according to Internet reports. IMDB.COM

Rachel gets top Spirit award nods

Border smuggling crime movie Frozen River won best picture and breakthrough acting awards at the Gotham Independent Film ceremony Tuesday, as well as sharing top billing in nominations for the Spirit Awards for independent filmmakers.

Melissa Leo, 48, was named by IFP, organizer of the Gotham awards, as breakthrough actor of the year for her role in Frozen River. She portrays a desperate single mother who is drawn into the world of immigrant smuggling near a Mohawk reservation between New York state and Quebec

Leo's performance has riveted movie critics, and the Gotham award and Spirit nomination put her in line for wider recognition as Hollywood's three-month movie awards season kicks into gear.

Earlier on Tuesday, Frozen River received six Spirit Award independent movie nominations along with family drama Rachel Getting Married starring Anne Hathaway, and small-town drama Ballast.

The Spirit Awards, one of the best-known honours for independent movies, are handed out Feb. 21 on the eve of the annual Oscar ceremony.

Spirit Award organizers Tuesday announced that this year's prestigious Robert Altman Award, given to the best director, casting director and ensemble cast, was won by Synecdoche, New York.

The movie also shared the best ensemble award from Gotham along with Woody Allen's Vicky Cristina Barcelona. The Gotham Awards were handed out in New York on Tuesday.

Synecdoche, New York, a quirky tale of a despairing theatre director played by Philip Seymour Hoffman, was written and directed by Charlie Kaufman and picked up another three Spirit nominations, including best screenplay, in the main categories.

Other leading contenders for the Spirit Awards included the San Francisco-set biopic Milk, starring Sean Penn as gay rights pioneer Harvey Milk, with four nominations. The Wrestler, starring Mickey Rourke, and Vicky Cristina Barcelona each had three nominations.

"This is truly the year of original voices, among both veteran and new filmmakers," said Dawn Hudson, executive director of Film Independent, which hands out the Spirit Awards. REUTERS

Awards season

- The Hollywood awards season moves into full gear this month with nominations for the Golden Globes and the Screen Actors Guild awards, which are handed out in January ahead of the industry's top honours, the Oscars, Feb. 22.

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VINCE BUCCI/GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO

Actress Neve Campbell, above, is returning to series television.

Campbell drawn to Philanthropist

MOVIES Neve Campbell is returning to series television with a co-starring role on NBC's midseason drama The Philanthropist.

The Philanthropist centres on Teddy Rist (James Purefoy), a renegade billionaire who uses his wealth, connections and power to help people in need around the world.

Party of Five alumna Campbell will play the wife of his business partner and lifelong friend, Phillip (Jesse Martin), who runs the two billionaires' charitable foundation and has strong chemistry with Teddy.

REUTERS/HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

See complete online movie listings, trailers, reviews and purchase tickets at metronews.ca/movies

Case schedules Middle Cyclone for March

MUSIC Neko Case will follow 2006's Fox Confessor Brings the Flood, the best-selling album of her career, with Middle Cyclone.

Due March 3 via Anti-, the collection boasts guest appearances from the Band's Garth Hudson, fellow Canadian singer-songwriter Sarah Harmer; M. Ward; members of Case's primary band, the New Pornographers, and musicians from Calexico, Los Lobos, Giant Sand, the Lilys and the Sadies.

Neko Case

The album's 12 original tunes are augmented by covers of Harry Nilsson's Don't Forget Me and Sparks' Never Turn Your Back on Mother Earth.

Fox Confessor Brings the Flood brought Case to a new level of commercial visibility, having sold 194,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. REUTERS/BILLBOARD

Twilight star Stewart to play rocker Jett

Fresh from the box-office success of Twilight, Kristen Stewart is set to portray Joan Jett in The Runaways, the rock 'n' roll biopic of the 1970s all-girl band.

The Runaways were hugely influential as the first commercially successful all-girl hard rock band; their members included guitarists Jett and Lita Ford, drummer Sandy West, singer-keyboardist Cherie Currie and bassist Jackie Fox.

The band was brought together in late 1975 by impresario Kim Fowley, who thought a novelty act of teenage girls performing in leather and lace would be an easy sell. But the girls proved to be serious and influential musicians with songs like Cherry Bomb.

DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

Kristen Stewart arrives for the U.K. film premiere of Twilight at the Vue Cinema in Leicester Square, London, England, yesterday.

The band lasted about four years, falling apart over management and money issues.

Jett continued her rock career into the '80s, forming the Blackhearts and scoring with such hits as I Love Rock N' Roll and I Hate Myself for Loving You. She continues to record and tour.

The film will revolve around Jett and Currie and follow them from the band's meteoric rise as teenagers to its dissolution and their disillusionment.

Video director Floria Sigismondi wrote the screenplay and is directing. Jett will serve as an executive producer.

The filmmakers are eyeing a 2009 start and will work around Stewart's commitments to the two Twilight sequels.

The first, New Moon, is expected to shoot in first-quarter 2009, with Stewart reprising her role as Bella, the human who falls for a vampire.

Twilight has made more than $120 million since opening Nov. 21.

REUTERS/HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Harper's Island to launch after CSI

New show gets prime spot on CBS schedule

CBS' new mystery series Harper's Island will receive the network's strongest lead-in next year when the show launches after CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.

The 13-episode Island — a Ten Little Indians-style thriller in which a group of wedding guests are killed off one by one — will step in for Eleventh Hour at 10 p.m. Thursdays starting April 9 and will run into midsummer. On Monday, CBS announced five more episodes for Eleventh Hour, a shorter order than a full season, to accommodate the plan.

The network also scheduled the return of the Canadian drama Flashpoint on Friday nights. The crime drama held up impressively in the summer for the network and returns at 9 p.m. Jan. 9, filling the spot vacated this fall by The Ex-List. The network has long sought a strong drama to bridge the gap between Ghost Whisperer and Numbers and hopes Flashpoint will deliver.

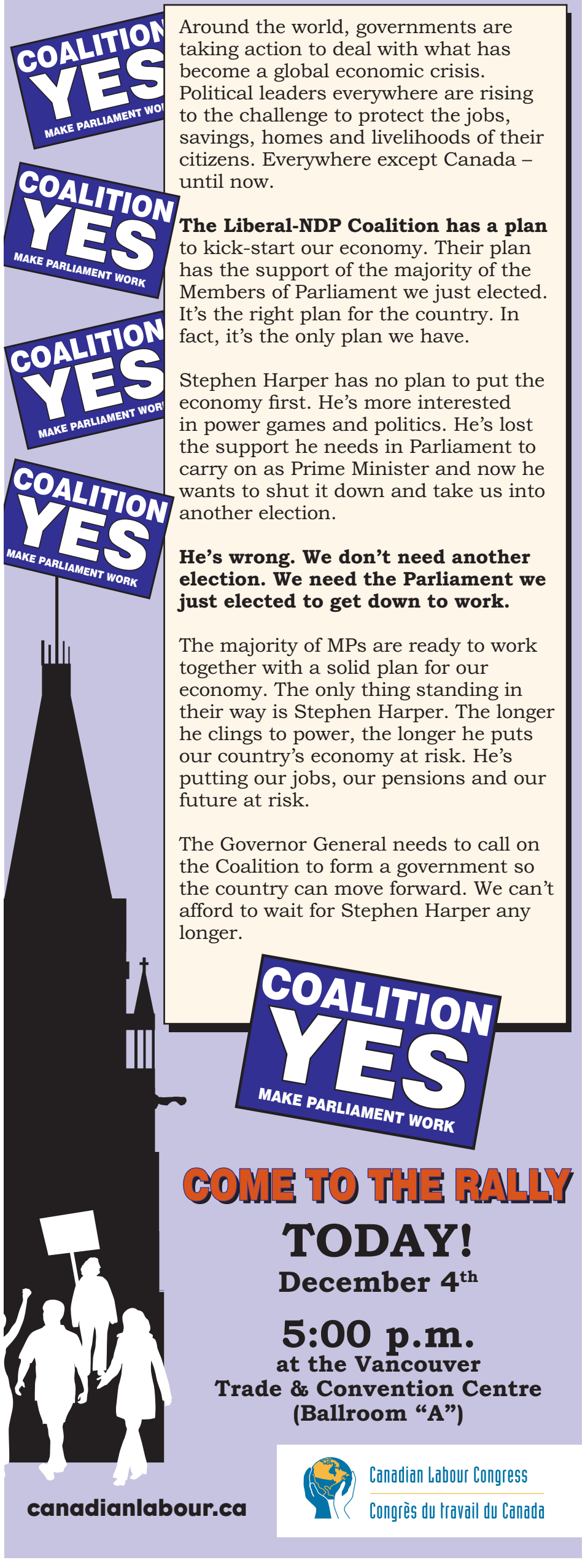
"The network also scheduled the return of the Canadian drama Flashpoint on Friday nights. The crime drama held up impressively in the summer for the network."

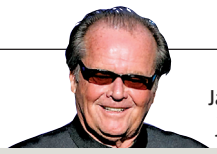
In addition, CBS will air Ashton Kutcher's new series Game Show in My Head on Saturday nights starting Jan. 3. The hidden-camera show is hosted by Joe Rogan, with contestants performing five outrageous and embarrassing tasks for a chance to win as much as $50,000.

In a season where most networks' spring schedules will barely resemble their fall lineups, CBS' midseason programming boasts few changes and few surprises. Flashpoint performed well on Fridays previously, and the network has an opening, so it's going back where it worked before.

Eleventh Hour has been placing second in its time period, and trying Island in this valuable slot gives the new project the best possible chance to succeed.

CBS hasn't had much luck with the game show genre in prime time, and given how well its scripted programming is performing, its decision not to shift any of the other shows to accommodate a new unscripted series isn't a big surprise. REUTERS





Jack and Jane fetch places in California Hall of Fame

Jack Nicholson and Jane Fonda are to be inducted into the California Hall of Fame in Sacramento on Dec. 15. The actors are joined on the list of 2008 inductees by musicians Dave Brubeck and Quincy Jones and fitness guru Jack LaLanne. **IMDB.COM**

Rowling back in stores

The Tales of Beedle the Bard is unofficial Potter farewell

A new book by British author J.K. Rowling, her unofficial farewell to the adventures of boy wizard Harry Potter, which made her the world's wealthiest writer, goes on sale today.

Proceeds from The Tales of Beedle the Bard, expected to become an international bestseller even though the seven-book Potter series is over, will go to a charity for vulnerable children in Eastern Europe co-founded by Rowling.

Beedle the Bard is a collection of five fairy tales and is mentioned in the final Potter book Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows as having been left to the boy wizard's friend Hermione Granger by Albus Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts school.

Only one of the five stories — The Tale of the Three Brothers — was recounted in the Potter book, and the volume contains clues that were to prove crucial to Potter's final mission to destroy Lord Voldemort.

CHIP EAST/REUTERS

One of seven original copies of J.K. Rowling's book, The Tales of Beedle the Bard, is on display at the New York Public Library. The 157-page book is handwritten and illustrated by Rowling.

Indicating the interest the new book is likely to generate with Potter fans young and old, one of seven handwritten, illustrated copies of Beedle the Bard made by Rowling fetched $4 million at auction a year ago.

Online book store Amazon, which bought that copy, is printing up to 100,000 collector's editions costing $100, and the global print run will be around 7.5 million copies.

Bloomsbury will distribute the book in Britain and Scholastic in the United States.

Publishers and retailers give all net profits to the chosen charity once their costs are covered, and retailers who sell the book at a discount — a common practice with the Potter series as stores fought for market share — do so at a loss.

In the sale catalogue for the auctioned copy, Rowling wrote:

"The Tales of Beedle the Bard is really a distillation of the themes found in the Harry Potter books, and writing it has been the most wonderful way to say goodbye to a world I loved and lived in for 17 years."

She is hoping Beedle the Bard will live up to expectations and make millions of pounds for The Children's High Level Group (www.chlg.org), which she co-founded with European parliamentarian Emma Nicholson.

REUTERS

Photocall **Australia in Spain**

CARLOS ALVAREZ/GETTY IMAGES

Actors Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman attend an Australia photocall yesterday at the Ritz Hotel in Madrid, Spain.

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Cinematheque honours Jackson

There probably never have been so many expletives used to show appreciation at an awards show as there were at the 23rd annual American Cinematheque Awards, which honoured Samuel L. Jackson.

From Justin Timberlake to George Lopez and Andy Garcia to Sharon Stone, the F-bomb and the long-form version of "mofo" were tossed around like chicken feed Monday night as Hollywood celebrated the actor whose name has become synonymous with "badass."

The honouree, when the time came to accept the award from presenter George Lucas, was more pensive and measured by comparison. Jackson talked about how much the experience of going to the movies meant to him, when he would catch Saturday double features in a segregated theatre in his hometown of Chattanooga, Tenn., and how important he thinks Cinematheque's work is in promoting the social side of filmmaking.

FRED PROUSER/REUTERS

Samuel L. Jackson accepts his lifetime achievement award at the American Cinematheque tribute in Beverly Hills, Calif.

"I felt a bond with everyone in that theatre," Jackson said. "(It was) a kinship that opened up a whole new world."

Jackson also offered support to Bollywood and those affected by last week's terrorist massacre in Mumbai, India.

"There are some nasty people who want to keep us not socializing and indoors," he said. "We can't let that happen."

The complexity Jackson brings to his roles was a frequent topic. Denzel Washington said Jackson plays men who can be considered "the righteous who believe they are sinners and the sinners who believe they are righteous."

REUTERS

Chicken Soup dished up for TV

SERIES Dick Clark Prods. has inked a deal with Chicken Soup for the Soul Publishing to develop an unscripted TV series based on the bestselling books to be co-hosted by book series co-creator Jack Canfield.

"Now more than ever, there is a desire for uplifting, positive and inspiring themes, and the Chicken Soup for the Soul books are the perfect embodiment of this," DCP president Orly Adelson said. **REUTERS**

In brief

MOVIES John Brownlow, who penned the script for the biopic Sylvia, has been hired to write Captain Blood, Warner Bros.' remake of the 1935 swashbuckler. **REUTERS**

NO SYSTEM ACCESS FEES
the new fido

Hargitay hints at departure from show
Mariska Hargitay has hinted she may be leaving top cop show Law + Order: SVU after a decade to spend more time as a mom. Her son, August, was born in 2006 and the actress admits she and husband Peter Hermann are "trying" for a second child. IMDB.COM

Here come the fillers

IntelleVision

rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

NOW I KNOW THE NETWORKS ARE IN TROUBLE: Casablanca, a much-loved film classic, is 102 minutes long. The Wizard Of Oz is 101 minutes, and Citizen Kane is 105 minutes, but when Celebrity Apprentice returns to NBC early next year, it will be two hours long, with commercials.

I'm not sure what that all means, but I think it bears thinking about.

"Donald has always felt the boardrooms were too short, and I think he's right," Mark Burnett, the show's executive producer, told TV Week magazine.

"Right now, there's really only about nine minutes of footage that we use and the boardroom (scenes) go on for hours sometimes. The problem has been trying to squeeze it all in. Every season we go through the struggle of cutting the show down."

A shortfall in programming was one of the outcomes feared when the writer's strike ground on to a third month, and it seems to have played out on cue, especially at NBC, the most erratic and afflicted of the four networks, especially under the up-is-down-black-is-white reign of Ben Silverman.

Celebrity Apprentice isn't the only show that's getting bulked up to fill airtime — The Biggest Loser: Couples will be expanding to fit a 2-hour slot on Tuesdays, and Howie Do It, the new Howie Mandel comedy vehicle co-produced by NBC and Canwest, will be hour-long on Fridays.

According to TV Week, NBC will feature at least five hours of unscripted programming in primetime every week this winter.

And if that doesn't work out, there are live executions and all those hours of Japanese game shows where people take pot shots at each other over shark tanks and open sewers.

"A shortfall in programming was one of the outcomes feared when the writer's strike ground on to a third month, and it seems to have played out on cue, especially at NBC."

COOKED UP: First Gordon Ramsay's career goes into a power dive when he's hit with allegations of cheating on his wife and betraying the family man image he's cultivated over the years, and now Nigella Lawson is accused of riding a fake bus and cooking in a fake home.

The UK Daily Mail tabloid accused Lawson of deceiving her viewers by staging a scene of her riding a London bus with extras, and of shooting the cooking scenes supposedly set at her home in a studio. Lawson fired back at the "dingbats" at the Mail in a Guardian article, saying that viewers know what they're watching. "When I say on TV, 'This cake takes 20 minutes to bake" and then one minute later it's ready, what do they think I have done? Do they think I have some kind of Time Lord qualities?"

If this looks at all ridiculous, let's just remember we're talking about British food programs, the mere existence of which is an improbability defying all known laws of nature.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

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More Californication ahead

SHOW Showtime has greenlighted a third season of its comedy series Californication, which stars David Duchovny as a hedonistic Los Angeles writer.

The premium cable network has ordered 12 episodes scheduled to go into production in the spring for a late 2009 premiere.

Duchovny plays Hank Moody, novelist/blogger who struggles to raise his Goth-loving teen daughter (Madeleine Martin), while still carrying a torch for his disapproving ex-girlfriend (Natascha McElhone).

"This unapologetic show, about a group of characters led by the inimitable David Duchovny, has quickly established itself as one of our signature comedy series," Showtime president of entertainment Robert Greenblatt said. REUTERS

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/4/08	251	308	3 CBC	News (CC)	Jeopardy! (N)	Coronation St.	Wheel-Fortune	B.C. 150th Birthday		CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	255	358	6 JOY	E! News	The Insider	Name Is Earl	Kath & Kim	The Road to Christmas (2006, Comedy) Jennifer Grey. (CC)				News (N)
	254	-	8 M	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		Metropia
	250	321	9 CTV	etalk (CC)	Hollywood	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		Grey's Anatomy (N) (CC)		(:01) ER "Let it Snow" (N)		News (N)
	-	-	10 OMNI	Scrubs (CC)	According-Jim	Smallville "Plastique" (CC)		Supernatural (CC)		The Daily	Diya (CC)	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	Survivor: Gabon (N) (CC)		The Office (N)	Billable Hours	Fascinating People of 2008		News (N)
	256	389	12 VI	Instant Star	TMZ (N) (CC)	Santa Baby (2006) Jenny McCarthy, George Wendt. (CC)				(:01) Eleventh Hour "Titans"		News (CC)
	253	359	13 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Ugly Betty "Bad Amanda" (N)		30 Rock	30 Rock (N)	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	Realty TV
	-	-	14 CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	Smallville "Plastique" (CC)		Supernatural (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	Survivor: Gabon (N) (CC)		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		(:01) Eleventh Hour "Titans"		News (N)
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	Name Is Earl	Kath & Kim	The Office (N)	(:31) 30 Rock	(:01) ER "Let it Snow" (N)		News (N)
	602	568	19 W	Will & Grace	Friends (CC)	Divine Design	House	Confidential	House	Divine Design	House	Love It-List It
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Ugly Betty "Bad Amanda" (N)		Grey's Anatomy (N) (CC)		Fascinating People of 2008		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	Radio ★★ (2003, Drama) Cuba Gooding Jr., Ed Harris.				King	Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Monarchy: The Royal Family at Work (CC)		Great Performances "Hitman: David Foster and Friends"					Magnificent Mind	
	290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Kitchen Nightmares (CC)		Kitchen Nightmares (CC)		News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
	-	364	43 PBS	Roy Orbison & Friends		Red Green Story: We're All in This			Roy Orbison & Friends: Black & White Night			Play Piano
	296	654	34 SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	The Insider	Entertainment	Paid Program
	298	653	35 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Smallville "Plastique" (CC)		Supernatural (CC)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	66 WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Sex and-City	Friends (CC)	Will & Grace	My Wife-Kids
	297	652	67 WPX	CW11 News at Ten (N) (CC)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	Will & Grace	According-Jim	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
	199	311	76 STR	News (N)	News		Late Show-Letterman		(:37) Life on Mars (CC)		Late Late Show	
news	502	390	29 NW	The Nature of Things (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		The Nature of Things (CC)		National
	500	500	33 CNN	Presents: Scream		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		CNN Presents "Scream Bloody Murder" Genocide. (CC)				Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	World Poker Tour		Hockey	Canucks TV	Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	NFL Football		SportsCentre (Live) (CC)		2007 Poker Million				SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Pilot Guides Specials (CC)		Pilot Guides (CC)		Don't Forget Your Passport		Commando: On the Front Line		Survivorman
	410	403	54 SCR	Poker: Million	NBA Basketball San Antonio Spurs at Denver Nuggets. (Subject to Blackout)					Score on NFL	Final Score	Final Score
	417	406	55 SC	Wrecked	Wrecked	Pinks	Pass Time	Pinks -- All Out		Pinks -- All Out		Wrecked
	416	409	144 GLF	Extra Time	Extra Time	Gol TV News		Soccer Cam	Hidden Story	Gol TV News		Extra Time
family	552	543	25 YTV	H2O, Just Add	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Sabrina-Witch	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Adrenaline	Mystery Hnt.
	555	545	50 TEL	Santa Claus	Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show		Wayside	Johnny Test	Futurama	The Critic	Chicken	Code
	557	541	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	553	546	56 TRE	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie	Beren. Bears	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Leading Edge	Big Ideas	Hemingway Adventure (CC)		Art of the Heist (N) (CC)		Vertical City	Design e2	School
	575	583	20 CMT	42nd Annual CMA Awards		Gone Country	Gone Country	The 42nd Annual CMA Awards Festivities honor excellence in country music.				
	570	580	24 MM	Gossip Girl (CC)		Video on Trial	Video on Trial	Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	MuchVibe (CC)		Spotlight
	600	564	29 H&G	Home to Flip	Real Renos	Holmes on Homes (CC)		The Fix (CC)	Disaster DIY	Home to Flip	Real Renos	Holmes
	615	520	31 A&E	The First 48 (CC)		Crime 360 "Deadly Secrets"		The First 48 (CC)		The First 48 (CC)		The First 48
	628	584	32 SPKE	(6:00) TNA iMPACT! (N) (CC)		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		Disorderly Conduct: Video		Married... With	Married... With	MXC
	521	560	34 TLC	LA Ink "Kat Tales" (N) (CC)		American Chopper (CC)		LA Ink "Kat Tales" (CC)		American Chopper (CC)		Overhaulin'
	616	522	39 SHO	Painkiller Jane (CC)		ReGenesis "Haze" (CC)		Trailer Park	Trailer Park	NUMB3RS "Trust Metric"		House (CC)
	620	523	40 BVO	(6:00) Cake (2005) (CC)		Law & Order "Entitled" (CC)		Without a Trace "Copy Cat"		Cake (2005) Heather Graham. (CC)		
	601	562	41 SLC	The Biggest Loser		Rich Bride, Poor Bride (CC)		X-Weighted (CC)		The Biggest Loser		Trading Sp
	520	505	42 DIS	MythBusters (CC)		Daily Planet (CC)		Monster Moves (CC)		The Body Machine (CC)		
	522	506	44 HIS	NCIS "Kill Ari" (CC)		Lost Worlds (CC)		Finding the Fallen (CC)		NCIS "Kill Ari" (CC)		Crime Stories
	627	528	45 SPC	Chuck (CC)		Stargate SG-1 "Singularity"		Lost "Further Instructions"		Star Trek: Deep Space Nine		Star Trek
	294	650	47 TBS	The Santa Clause ★★★ (1994, Comedy) (PA) Tim Allen. (CC)				Sex and-City	Sex and-City	(:15) Sleepless in Seattle ★★★ (1993) (CC)		
	619	525	48 TROP	Beverly Hills, 90210 (CC)		Make	What	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)	Family Guy
	603	561	52 FN	Jamie's Kitchen Australia (N)		Restaurant Makeover (CC)		Challenge "Mac & Cheese"		Unwrapped	Secret Life of	Jamie
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Colbert Christmas: Gift		Daily Show
	320	621	60 CEN	Mad Money ★★ (2008) Diane Keaton. (CC)			(:45) Evan Almighty ★★ (2007, Comedy) Steve Carell. (CC)			Next ★★ (2007) (CC)		
	581	566	101 MTV	True Life Fluctuating weight.		MTV Live	After	Paris Hilton's My New BFF		True Life Fluctuating weight.		MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	(6:00) Before Sunrise ★★★		Emily of New Moon (CC)		Before Sunrise ★★★ (1995) Ethan Hawke, Julie Delpy. (CC)				Paid Program
	-	-	109 MUL	Matchmaker	Mom's-Upset	Vancouver	Kirdaar	Dheeyan Ghar	Sadabahar	Desi-Mama	Desi Rhythms	Patrol World

critics'corner

30 Rock
It's been statistically proven that a successful high-school reunion happens once every 50 years. Yet Jack (Alec Baldwin) convinces Liz (Tina Fey) that she should go to her reunion against her better judgment. Meanwhile, Don Geiss (guest star Rip Torn) wakes up from his coma and shocks Jack with a declaration about who will be the company's CEO. Shaken, Jack tries to get away to blow off steam, but bad weather forces him to attend Liz's reunion instead. 9:30 PM on CITY

Barbara Walters Presents: The 10 Most Fascinating People of 2008
We're not sure who left it up to Barbara Walters to decide who are the 10 most fascinating people each year, but they did a pretty good job because Walters is normally dead-on. This year she outdoes herself with choices from the worlds of entertainment, sports, politics and pop culture including Will Smith, Tom Cruise, Tina Fey, Rush Limbaugh, Miley Cyrus and Michael Phelps. The No. 1 most fascinating person will be announced on the program. 10:01 PM on ABC

McDermott's divorce nearly finalized

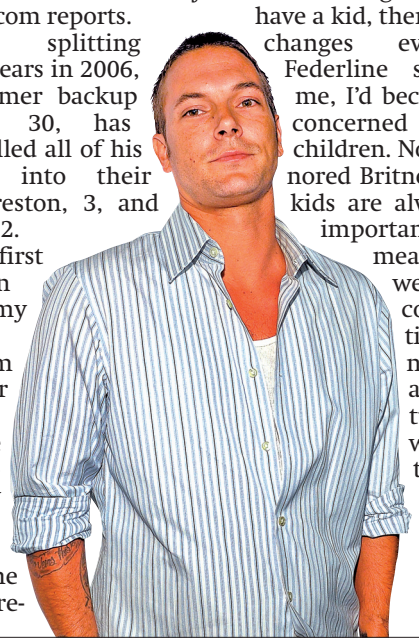
Actor Dylan McDermott will soon be a single man once again. On Tuesday, a Los Angeles superior court judge ruled that the divorce between McDermott and his wife, Shiva Rose, will be finalized on Jan. 2. THECELEBRITYCAFE.COM

Celebrity Buzz

Kevin a happy dad

PARENTING Kevin Federline has been called many things in the nearly five years since Britney Spears walked into his life: Golddigger, wannabe rapper, partier. These days he answers to one name: Daddy, People.com reports.

Since splitting with Spears in 2006, the former backup dancer, 30, has channelled all of his energy into their sons Preston, 3, and Jayden, 2.



"My first question to (my lawyer) was, 'Am I ever going to be able to see my children?'" Federline said, regarding working out a custody arrangement with Spears.

She was the one who called it quits on their marriage, he added.

"It's hard enough to be in a marriage, and then have a kid, then kids — it changes everything," Federline said. "For me, I'd become more concerned with my children. Not that I ignored Britney, but my kids are always most important … I mean, we were having complications. I didn't give her an ultimatum, but I was trying to work stuff out with her."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Spears gets proposals

PEOPLE Britney Spears has received two marriage proposals, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The singer, who has wed twice before, is said to have been propositioned by her paparazzo exboyfriend Adnan Ghalib, who she met up with in September.

"Adnan has been bombarding Britney with texts telling her he loves her … He has even asked her to marry him," a source said. "Britney was taken aback. She and Adnan have amazing chemistry. But she knows he is bad news, and now friends and family are worried she will give him a second chance."

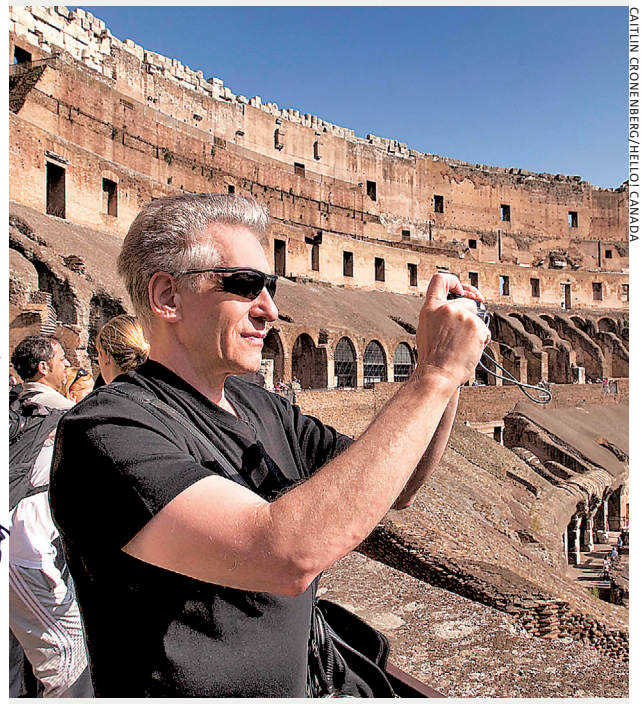
However, Spears has also reportedly received a proposal from hair salon manager Salvatore D'Angelo, whom she was introduced to last month.

"Salvatore just came out with it and popped the question two weeks ago … Britney was thrilled but told him she has to concentrate on work and being a good mother to her two sons. However, she said if he still feels the same way at the end of next year, she will consider marrying him."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

HELLO!

Hot shot of the week



CAITLIN CRONENBERG/HELLO! CANADA

Recently honoured in Rome with a retrospective of his work, filmmaker David Cronenberg reflects on a trip to the Italian captial exclusively in HELLO! Canada. "It was a very sweet experience," writes the Toronto-born Eastern Promises director, who brought his family, including his photographer daughter Caitlin (who took the picture, above, at the Colosseum).

HELLO! CANADA magazine, now available on newsstands – read more at hellomagazine.ca

Watts to pose in buff for art

PEOPLE Actress Naomi Watts is to strip for a nude painting by a top Australian artist, imdb.com reports.

Watts has reportedly agreed to pose for David Bromley, who is famed for his naked portraits of famous women, as part of his submission for Australia's prestigious Archibald Prize next year.

Bromley, who has also painted Kylie Minogue, is delighted the star has agreed to the project.

"My people are talking to her people," he says.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Coleman pleads no contest in court

LEGAL Actor Gary Coleman has pleaded no contest to disorderly conduct after attacking a photographer outside a Utah bowling alley, imdb.com reports.

The former Diff'rent Strokes star was in court on Tuesday to face charges stemming from the incident, which took place earlier this year. He was fined.

Coleman and his wife reportedly hit Colt Rushton with their vehicle in a Payson parking lot after he refused to stop taking cellphone snapshots of the couple.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Miller's rep blasts British press

RUMOUR Sienna Miller's representative has blasted the British press for alleging the actress had split from oil heir Balthazar Getty last month, insisting recent quotes attributed to the star are "three years old," imdb.com reports.

The actress has been romantically linked to Getty since the summer when they were seen in Prague in the Czech Republic, on the set of Miller's new movie G.I. Joe: Rise of Cobra.

Miller was rumoured to have broken off her romance with Getty. She was then alleged to have confirmed the split and was quoted as saying, "I'm single at the moment, and I'm completely happy with that."

Miller and Getty later appeared to have rekindled their love affair, after they were spotted together in London last week.

But Miller's spokesperson claims the couple never parted ways in the first place, and is adamant the quotes have been rehashed from an old interview, because the actress hasn't commented on her private life in recent weeks.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Olsen's rep denies pregnancy reports

RUMOUR Despite a recent National Enquirer report, Mary-Kate Olsen is not expecting her first child, usmagazine.com reports.

"Mary-Kate is absolutely not pregnant," her rep said. According to the paper, rumours the 22-year-old was pregnant started when her weight shot up to 102 pounds.

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Chenoweth to pen memoirs

BOOK Actress/singer Kristin Chenoweth is the latest celebrity to write about her own life in a forthcoming memoir, imdb.com reports. The Pushing Daisies star will discuss being adopted, her rise to fame, and her role in the hit Broadway show Wicked. The book is scheduled to hit shelves in April.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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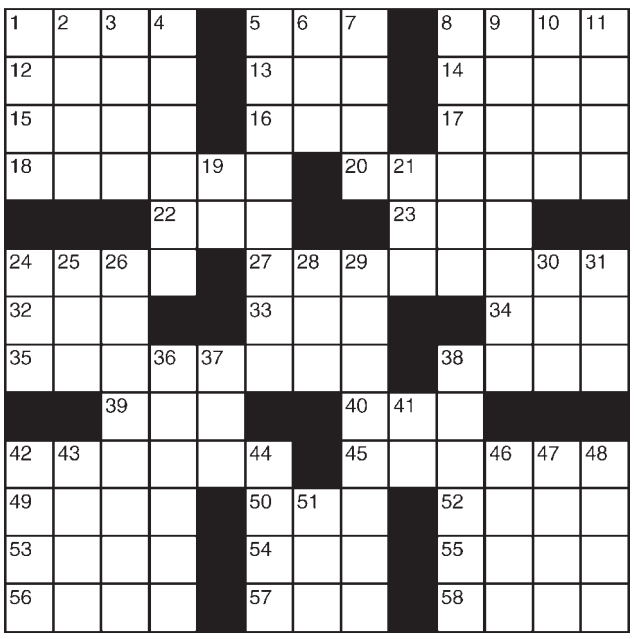
Take Five



Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

		5					1	9
	7	2		4	1			
3			8					
9		6	7		8			
	8						9	
			3		2	5		8
					9			1
			4	7		9	3	
2	4					6		

Crossword across

1 Oologist's subject
5 Adipose tissue
8 Roundish hairstyle
12 Reynolds or Lancaster
13 Falsehood
14 Whip
15 Heehaw
16 Commercials
17 Den
18 Rental flat, perhaps
20 Play a piccolo
22 Will Ferrell
Christmas movie
23 Dog's foot
24 Sword handle
27 In the wings
32 Under the weather
33 OPEC commodity
34 Set up
35 Italian "slipper" bread
38 Nevada city
39 Yank
40 Dead heat
42 Piano style
45 Erratically
changeable
49 Lady's guy
50 Sapporo sash
52 Privy to
53 Carbon compound
54 "— Miniver"
55 Have an inclination
56 Force unit
57 "Humbug!"
58 Lambs' dams

Crossword down

1 Recedes
2 Pundit
3 Snatch
4 Thin surgical implement
5 Beat cop (Sl.)
6 Succor
7 Criterion
8 Showing buoyancy
9 Eating utensils
10 Disturb
11 Shrek, e.g.
19 Urban transport
21 Chances, for short
24 Toper's interrupter
25 "The Greatest"
26 Pressing need?
28 Suitable
29 Halibut, for one
30 Card player's call
31 Swelled head
36 Bale
37 Time of your life?
38 Speak from memory
41 Afternoon hour on a sundial
42 Coaster
43 Small horse
44 "Who's buried in Grant's —?"
46 Recognized
47 Unescorted
48 Odds' mates
51 Support system?

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

W	A	G	S	■	A	L	L	■	A	V	E	R		
E	S	A	U	■	P	E	A	■	M	E	R	E		
V	E	R	B	A	T	I	M	■	A	R	I	A		
E	A	R	T	H	■	■	P	R	I	M	E	D		
■	■	■	■	L	A	V	A	■	U	N	O	■	■	■
F	I	V	E	■	E	E	L	S	■	U	K	E		
O	R	E	■	D	I	G	I	T	■	T	E	A		
P	E	R	■	A	L	I	S	■	C	H	A	R		
■	■	■	O	H	M	■	S	A	R	I	■	■	■	■
M	A	N	A	N	A	■	■	U	N	I	T	E		
O	T	I	C	■	V	E	R	T	E	B	R	A		
M	O	C	K	■	O	W	E	■	M	E	E	T		
S	P	A	S	■	W	E	D	■	A	X	E	S		

9	7	8	2	4	5	3	1	6
4	3	2	7	1	6	5	9	8
1	5	6	8	9	3	2	7	4
2	6	1	3	8	4	9	5	7
5	9	4	6	7	2	8	3	1
3	8	7	1	5	9	4	6	2
8	1	3	5	2	7	6	4	9
7	4	5	9	6	8	1	2	3
6	2	9	4	3	1	7	8	5

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Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Steak Skewered with Two Onions

INGREDIENTS:
1 1/2 lb (680 g) sirloin or rump steak, trimmed of all fat
2 medium red onions
8 fat scallions
1 tbsp (15 mL) Dijon mustard
1 tsp (5 mL) Worcestershire sauce
1/2 tsp (2 mL) red wine vinegar
Salt and black pepper
4 tbsp (60 mL) light olive oil

METHOD:
1. Preheat grill to high. Cut meat into 20 equal cubes. Peel, top and tail red onions, cut in half widthwise and cut each half into four wedges. Rinse scallions, trim to lengths of 4 in. (10 cm) and cut in half lengthwise.
2. Onto each of four metal skewers, about 16 in. (40 cm) long, thread five pieces of meat, alternating with a combination of red and green onions.
3. Lay the skewers across grill pan or roasting pan, balancing ends on the rim.
4. Mix mustard, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, salt, and pepper in a small bowl, then whisk in oil.
5. Brush half the mixture over kabobs, then grill, close to the heat source, for 3–5 minutes. Turn skewers, brush with remaining mixture and grill for a further 3–5 minutes.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
A bitter person's aloofness makes you smile. Nothing can get you down for long. Tell everyone about better ways to succeed.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
A person's reaction will be over the top. It's up to you to give a reality check. Anything can happen if you respond happily to a request.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Now is the time to yield to a sense of enchantment. You'll move easily into an alliance. Be fair to a shy person.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Don't set aside a commitment. The signs of the future are all around. You'll gain the sympathy of a friend.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A former party-girl is longing for pure devotion. Don't try to catch up in a silly debate. A transit delay can reduce the number of your boring tasks.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
An illness has unforeseen consequences. A beginner's loyalty is tested. Compose yourself and think again about a decision.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A misunderstanding brings about a fortunate friendship. A loss of nerve comes out in the open. An angry man is passionately awaited.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Business confusion is blamed for misbehaviour. Nobody knows that your feelings are deep. A lucky person doesn't let a chance go by.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
An obsession interferes in a new relationship. Deliberate flippancy won't be highly regarded. A fantasy won't give you any security.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
A sensible man gives wonderful gifts. It's time to see a doctor. Having different options will please you.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Your energy level rises as time goes by. An unexpected gift comes in the nick of time. Someone will be forced to leave.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
The reason for a bit of gossip will stun you. Resist being stuck in a dreary rut. An outgoing friend has broken a meaningless bond.

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This day in history

DEC. 4, 1791: The first issue of The Observer, the world's first Sunday newspaper, is published.
DEC. 4, 1909: First Grey Cup game was played. The University of Toronto Varsity Blues defeated the Toronto Parkdale Canoe Club.
DEC. 4, 1952: Great Smog of 1952: A cold fog descends upon London, combining with air pollution and killing at least 12,000 in the weeks and months that follow.
DEC. 4, 1954: The first Burger King is opened in Miami.
DEC. 4, 2005: Tens of thousands of people in Hong Kong protest for democracy and call on the government to allow universal and equal suffrage.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Metropolis at Metrotown - kiosk

CHILLIWACK
Cottonwood Mall

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